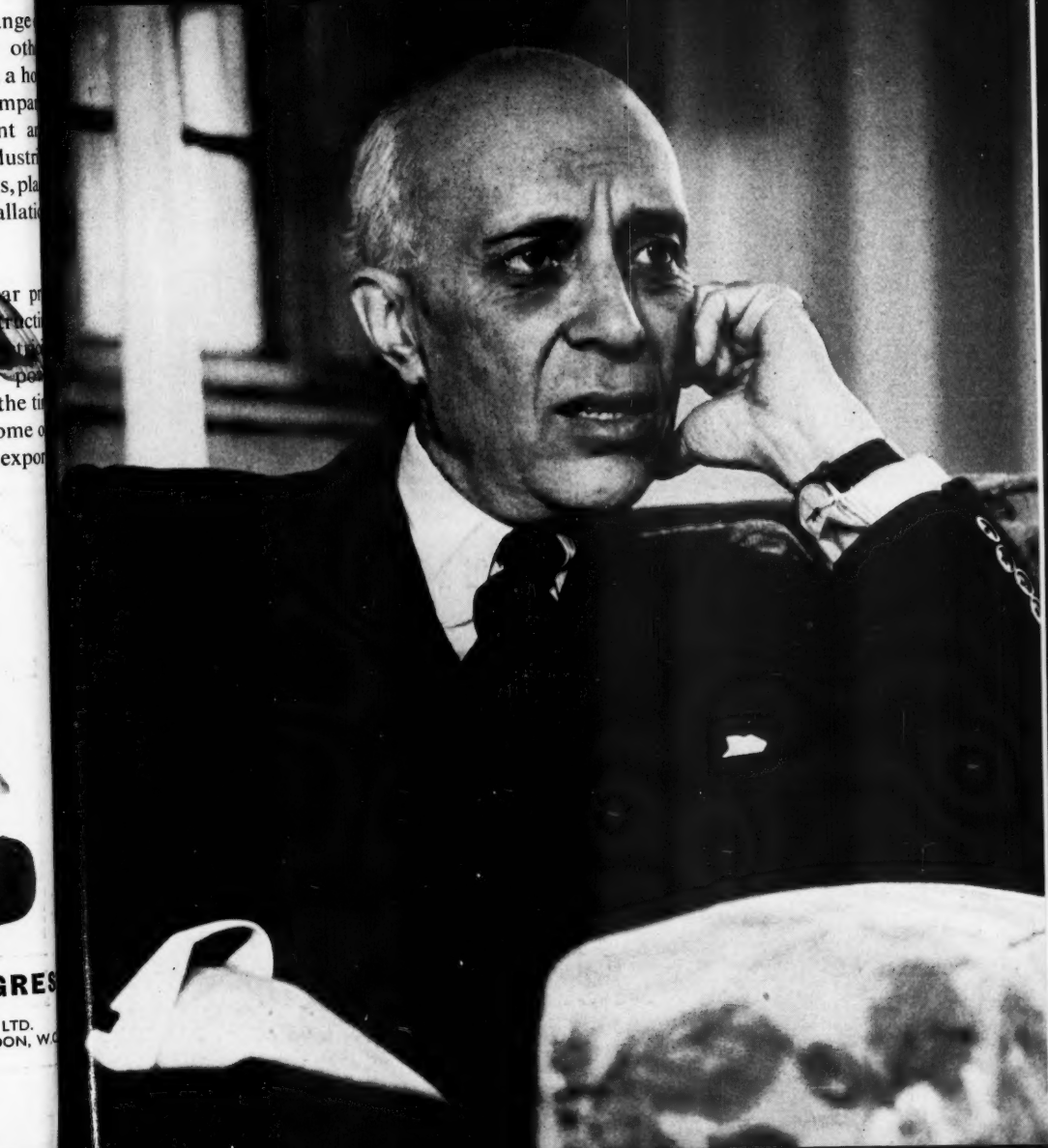


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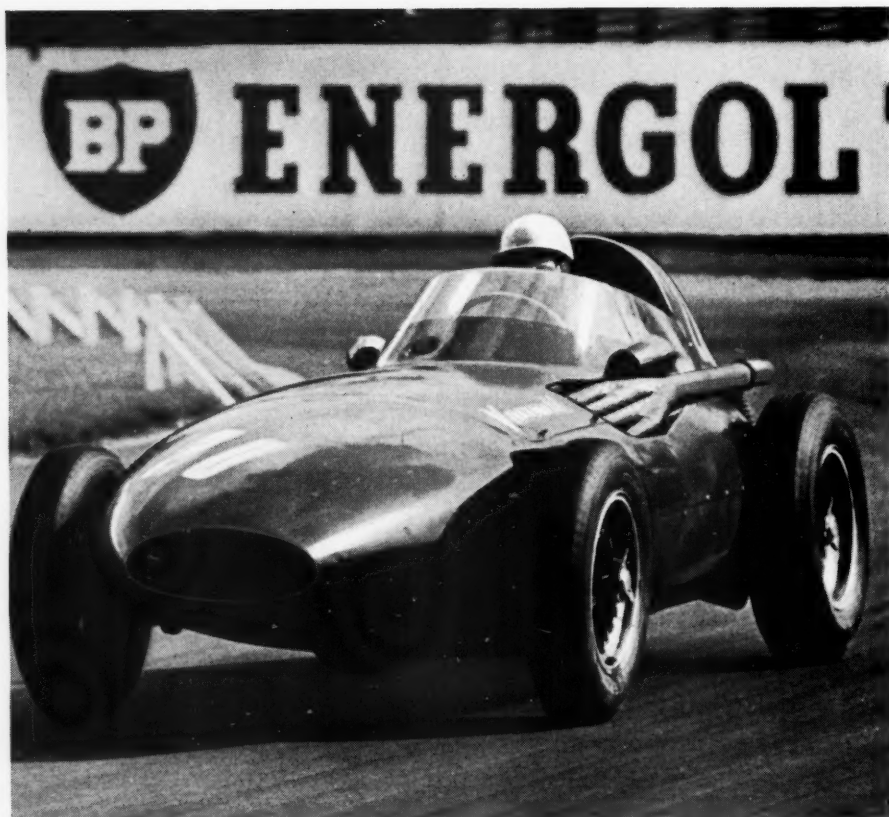
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# THE NATIONAL AND ENGLISH REVIEW

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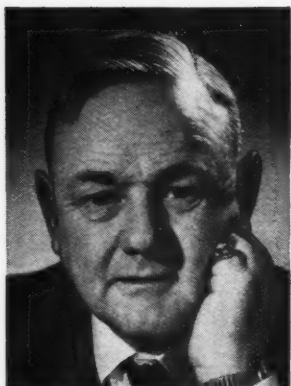


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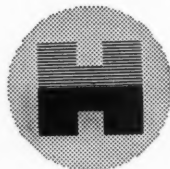
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# THE NATIONAL AND ENGLISH REVIEW

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## *Episodes of the Month*

### Macmillan's Finest Hour

OUR readers know that we have hitherto held no brief for Mr. Macmillan as Prime Minister, though we have never failed to pay tribute to his intelligence. He was, as we indicated long ago, a much better candidate for the Premiership than his more generally favoured rival, Mr. Butler, but the circumstances in which he attained the position made Lloyd George's advent to power in 1916 seem, in retrospect, like a Sunday School exercise. Such was his complicity in the Suez business that, instead of quietly taking over Sir Anthony Eden's job, he should by rights have gone into immediate retirement, considering himself extremely lucky not to be impeached; and the same applies to all his Cabinet colleagues. If the standards of our public life had not been seriously debased, this is what must inevitably have happened.

But standards *have* been debased and it did *not* happen. This is a situation which must be faced, not indeed with complacency, but at least with realism; and Mr. Macmillan's performance as Prime Minister must be judged fairly on its merits—as Lloyd George's too must be judged. Ends do not justify means, but good deeds are good, whether performed by a sinner or by a saint.

With this maxim in mind we have no hesitation in saying that Mr. Macmillan's Commonwealth tour has been the finest act of his career. It is a far, far better thing than he has ever done, and even though the electoral guillotine may await him (a fate which is likely, but by no means certain) he has shown a nobility and a breadth of comprehension which should not be forgotten. His decision to visit a number of Commonwealth countries, including those which lie in

Asia, was sound and farsighted; his refusal to allow a major domestic crisis to affect his plans was magnificent and reveals him, perhaps for the first time, as a real statesman. From all accounts his journey to date (as we go to press he is in New Zealand) has been on the whole a genuine success, not least in the influence which it may have had upon his own thoughts and feelings. He is a sensitive man and the warmth of his reception, notably in India, may have shown him at last, and through him many others, that the Commonwealth is no phrase. By stressing that the United Kingdom is no longer even *primus inter pares*, but simply one member of an equal partnership, who has much to learn as well as much to contribute, he has done great service to a revolutionary idea, which is still widely misunderstood in this country.

### Anglocentricity

THE worst obstacle to Commonwealth unity is the exaggeration of national, racial or continental pride. We in this country have been very much to blame on all three counts, and the Suez incident was the most glaring case of what may be termed "Anglocentricity." Such wicked folly is unlikely to be repeated, if only for prudential reasons, but meanwhile the habit persists of looking at Commonwealth affairs in a rather patronizing way, rather as a Duke might survey the broad expanses of a county which bears his name, even though he has ceased to own much of the land. Thus the Commonwealth is referred to, quite incorrectly, as the British Commonwealth, and the odious word Empire is still linked with the word Commonwealth, sometimes by people who might indeed be expected to know better. Lord Attlee, for

instance, whose services to the Commonwealth are hardly equalled by any Englishman, spoke in the House of Lords on January 22 of "our far-flung Commonwealth and Empire"—an expression which would have seemed a bit old-fashioned even to Stalky and Co. It should be obvious to anyone who is not totally destitute of sympathy and imagination that the word Empire, though it may have gratifying overtones for some people in this country, has unpleasant and humiliating associations for many of our partners. The only valid word, therefore, is Commonwealth, which has for some time past been the recognized definitive term for the independent States and dependent territories in combination.

### Grim Struggle in Rhodesia

IN Southern Rhodesia a grim struggle is going on, which is of much concern to all who fear that the Federation may go the same way as the Union of South Africa. Mr. Garfield Todd, the Prime Minister, was faced with the resignation of his entire Cabinet, and though he has found other men to take their places the real test will come when he meets his party and Parliament. The outgoing Ministers objected fundamentally to Mr. Todd's views on the extension of political rights to Africans, though they have tried not to make this ulterior motive too obvious. Since it is unlikely that Sir Roy Welensky, Prime Minister of the Federation, will give Mr. Todd his unqualified support, the chances are that a thoroughly illiberal regime will before long be installed in Southern Rhodesia. The only good which could come of this would be the conversion of Mr. Todd to thorough-going liberalism, but this may be too much to hope for. In a special interview which he gave us on his first visit to this country (published in our issue of August 1954) he showed that his instincts were progressive, but in many respects cautious and inhibited. Now is his chance to show that he is prepared to fight shoulder to shoulder, and on equal terms, with his black compatriots for the establishment of a true democracy in Central Africa.

### The Cloud-Capped Summit

WHILE in Delhi Mr. Macmillan had long and apparently most cordial talks with Mr. Nehru, one of the principal themes of which must have been the prospect of general pacification and disarmament. It cannot be doubted that another "summit" meeting will

before very long take place, and the more the Western Powers appear to be reluctant to attend such a meeting the greater will be the value of it, in terms of prestige, to the Russians.

From such information as is available the Americans have been making the most difficulties, but it should soon be obvious to them, and to any other Governments which may be summit-shy, that a period of delay is wholly to the Russians' advantage. The argument that a top-level meeting might be a "waste of time," because nothing conclusive might emerge from it, is completely beside the point. Time spent at inconclusive meetings is not necessarily time wasted. If the Russians are bluffing, it is well worth while to hold a meeting simply to call their bluff. Failure to do so enables them to pose as the peace-makers.

One ugly thought which may be haunting the minds of Western statesmen is that the proposed neutralization of a reunited Germany would mean that Germany would have to contract out of the Common Market as well as NATO. To the federalist maniacs who have been so busily at work in recent years this must appear an unthinkable disaster, but to many it might seem a convenient way out of a most embarrassing and troublesome commitment. In any case it would be intolerable if West European economic integration were to be preferred to peace.

### Thorneycroft's Resignation

ON January 6, eve of Mr. Macmillan's departure for India, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Thorneycroft, and his two Under-Secretaries, Messrs. Birch and Powell, tendered their resignations. Though the Prime Minister made an engaging attempt, before boarding his aircraft, to treat this as an incident of only local and passing importance, it was not in this spirit that the news was received by the British public and the outside world. When a Government is ostensibly fighting all out against inflation, and the entire Ministerial team at the Treasury resigns claiming that the rest of the Government is not taking the fight seriously, or seriously enough, the repercussions are likely to be very considerable. In this case the result has probably been to bring about a change in Government policy and, what is more significant, a change in the political atmosphere. Mr. Thorneycroft's contention, in which he was supported by his two colleagues, was that the Estimates for next year should not exceed

## EPISODES OF THE MONTH

the total of expenditure in the current year. As he put it in his letter to the Prime Minister, "the Government itself must . . . accept the same measure of financial discipline as it seeks to impose on others." It appears that he asked for an assurance, before the Prime Minister left the country, that the Estimates would be limited according to the principle which he had laid down, and when he failed to get this assurance he resigned. On this view of the facts we have no doubt whatever that his action was perfectly justified.

### What Actually Happened

**B**UT one interesting and relevant point remains obscure. Was he insisting on some particular cut in the welfare services, or was he merely asking for a decision in principle and leaving the exact incidence of cuts to be worked out later? Official propagandists have been at pains to spread the former story. They have tried to depict Thorneycroft as a harsh economic purist and enemy of the Welfare State, in conflict with big-hearted Mac and Rab, the people's friends. This interpretation is hard to reconcile with what the Prime Minister said in his answer to Thorneycroft: "We were faced initially with Estimates which . . . were considerably higher. . . . Nevertheless, as a result of our work together, the Cabinet was able to reduce this excess to something less than one per cent. of the total of current Government expenditure." And as if to emphasize this unfortunate and incriminating passage in the Prime Minister's letter, Lord Hailsham addressed a message to party officials in which he said: ". . . we do not believe that the whole future of sterling does in fact depend, or can be represented to depend, on marginal differences in the annual Estimates which would not amount to more than one per cent. of the Government's annual expenditure." In other words, both the Prime Minister and his cheer-leader are on record as saying that it was the margin itself that was in dispute, and not the precise means whereby the margin would be wiped out.

### A Return to Decent Constitutional Practice

**W**HEN he spoke a few days later to his constituents at Newport, Mon., Mr. Thorneycroft was able to dispose of Macmillan and Hailsham with the ease of a cover drive from the bat of P. B. H. May. "If fifty millions [the one per cent.] is the figure and is a triviality, could it not be found somewhere out of the five thousand million

pounds to keep us straight?" In his Newport speech, and in his highly effective speech in the House of Commons on January 23, he took his stand firmly on the question of principle, thereby leaving himself the maximum freedom of manoeuvre. He disclaimed any intention of forming a splinter group, and indeed he is in no need of one, since Ministers and the Tory rank and file are falling over themselves to appear *plus* Thorneycroft *que* Thorneycroft. By stating that both Defence and Welfare State expenditure must not be regarded as sacrosanct, and by admitting that neither monetary nor physical controls have provided the answer to inflation, he has placed himself in a position where he can be seen to represent the national interest against the squalid electioneering preoccupations of both Front Benches. He has thus suddenly moved from being a politician with no following to speak of in the country to an eminence from which he may, in time, be able to dominate the political scene.

On the whole it seems most likely that Mr. Macmillan did not believe the three Ministers would resign, when it came to the point. He was busy preparing for his journey and he may have imagined that the moral cowardice, which has recently been such a marked feature of Cabinet Ministers, would restrain Mr. Thorneycroft. If so, he was wrong. The example of decent Constitutional practice, which was set by Mr. Nutting and Sir Edward Boyle alone at the time of Suez, has now begun to shame their colleagues into emulation. Lord Salisbury's resignation may have contributed to the new climate, but the chief share of credit is due to those two comparatively junior Ministers who had the honesty and temerity to give up their jobs in November, 1956. Those who are now praising the gallant three should not forget the rather more gallant two.

### The New Chancellor

**M**R. DERICK HEATHCOAT-AMORY, who has succeeded Mr. Thorneycroft as Chancellor of the Exchequer, is very much the Tory politicians' politician. He is often described as "sound," an adjective which in this specialized usage connotes a decently concealed intelligence, more than average efficiency, a willingness to take pains (for instance, in not hurting the feelings of moronic colleagues), a belief in good relations between management and the (not so easily) managed, a fine war record and a squirearchical background. There is, indeed, one feature which



might make him suspect—he is opposed to the death penalty—but his friends can plead in mitigation that he has been a zealous huntsman. He is the sort of man who makes up for not being first-class by pretending to be third-class, and so receives a quite disproportionate amount of credit for being top second-class. Soon after his appointment he announced disarmingly that he was a Chancellor with an “L” plate on his back. In saying this he was, of course, exaggerating his own amateurishness—a dangerous trick to play when confidence in sterling is so shaky, but a fair pointer to the man’s character and to the reasons for his success.

Some people are saying that he may turn out to be another Baldwin, and it is true that Baldwin was no better known when he became Chancellor of the Exchequer. But there is no evidence to suggest that Heathcoat-Amory has any of Baldwin’s uncanny flair and poetic insight. Whereas Baldwin was a man of genius masquerading as a sturdy British plodder, it appears from his record that Heathcoat-Amory is in fact little more than a sturdy British plodder. But he may surprise us—and how welcome that would be.

### Rebels at a Premium

**A**MONG the minor appointments resulting from the upheaval at the Treasury the most interesting was that of Sir Ian Horobin to be second-in-command at the Ministry of Power. Sir Ian is not everybody’s cup of tea. He is difficult, tense, moody and at times overbearing; but he has a penetrating intellect and a strong will. If he has been excluded from office until now, it is because of his virtues quite as much as his defects. While party discipline was applied in its full rigour there was no hope of promotion for a man who had frequently rebelled against the party leadership. But rebels are now rather at a premium. Mr. Macmillan has not always been a “good boy” himself, so he may have some fellow-feeling for those who will not be bound in a slavish political orthodoxy. He may also have the sense to realize that a man who is sure enough of his own mind to assert it against party bosses will be equally capable of doing so against civil servants and all the manifold pressures that are brought to bear upon a Minister. But above all he knows that the best way to confine the activities of a rebel is to give him office. Thus Horobin’s open support for Thorneycroft may have been the reason for his appointment—an odd paradox.

### Labour’s Poor Showing

**T**HE Labour Party showed up very badly in the economic debate following Mr. Thorneycroft’s resignation. Neither Mr. Gaitskell nor Mr. Wilson compared at all favourably with the main speakers on the Government side. When discussing inflation they are naturally handicapped by the fact that their party is committed to a highly inflationary programme.

Mr. Wilson may have been further embarrassed by the Report of the Parker Tribunal which had just been published. In this the innuendo that there had been a Bank rate “leak” was decisively rejected and the characters of those politicians and business men, whose names had been involved, were completely vindicated. This gave a further boost to the prestige of Mr. Thorneycroft, since at first some people may have vaguely thought that his resignation might in some way be connected with the “leak” inquiry. Mr. Wilson, on the other hand, emerged badly from the Report. He had spoken, under cover of Parliamentary privilege, of Mr. Oliver Poole’s city interests in a context which was calculated to focus suspicion upon Mr. Poole. Later, when giving evidence before the Parker Tribunal, he had suggested that Mr. Poole had acted improperly in showing a document, which he had received from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to Mr. Dear of the Conservative Research Department. The Tribunal’s comment was unequivocal: “We are satisfied that there is no validity in this suggestion.”

The air has been cleared by the Parker Report, but it is a great pity that the Government was so reluctant to order an inquiry. It must be admitted, however, that the *prima facie* evidence which the Opposition leaders adduced was remarkably flimsy.

### Electricians and the T.U.C.

**A**RESTRAINED, well-documented article by Woodrow Wyatt in the *New Statesman* showed how the Communists had maintained their power in the Electrical Trade Union. It has been known for years, of course, that they first came to power in that union through fraud, and they have maintained themselves through fraud ever since; but it was not until the events of last September that the public was stirred into a state of awareness. A Mr. Cannon, who had left the Communist Party over Hungary, stood for election to the executive council. There is no doubt that he obtained a majority of the votes—yet he was

## EPISODES OF THE MONTH

disqualified. Mr. Wyatt has explained exactly how it was done, and has also shown that it has been done many times before, though without attracting the same publicity.

The Prime Minister, when asked in the House of Commons to order an inquiry, very wisely—in this case—refused to do so, pointing out that it was for the unions themselves to put their own house in order. If he hoped that this extremely broad hint would be enough, he must now be disappointed. The Trade Union Congress, which is only too ready to pronounce on matters which are not really its concern, has shown a blatant disregard for its duty in regard to the E.T.U. scandal. Despite its unquestioned right to investigate a matter of this kind, it has so far done nothing at all. At this rate we shall soon be forced to conclude that the T.U.C. is as futile a body as the Press Council.

### Honour Where it is Due ?

**I**N the New Year Honours list a barony was conferred upon Sir John Harding, who had recently been replaced as Governor of Cyprus by the buoyant and experienced Sir Hugh Foot. If this recognition had been given to Sir John on purely military grounds it would have been well deserved, but in the circumstances it must have seemed to be given for political reasons as well. As a soldier Sir John was outstandingly good; as a politician and diplomat he was outstandingly bad. It was not his fault that he was offered a post for which he was totally unfitted, but he would have been wise, knowing his limitations, to refuse it.

As it is, after a campaign of repression which was quite out of keeping with the modern Commonwealth, he has been rewarded with a peerage, while Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, whose service in Ghana was of incalculable value, has been allowed to pass into retirement unhonoured. Who arranges these things ?

### Two Scottish Worthies

**W**ALTER ELLIOT and Lord Waverley were both distinguished sons of Scotland, though their temperaments and abilities were contrasted. Waverley was a brilliant

administrator, Elliot a brilliant man. Both were well stocked with knowledge, but whereas in Elliot's case it flowed from him as from a cornucopia, with Waverley it seemed to be locked away in a larder.

As a Parliamentarian Elliot will be long remembered. He was at home with people of all ages and parties, and when he led delegations overseas he never failed to convey an impression of dignity, friendliness and humour. Waverley, like Milner, was a civil servant who later became in turn proconsul and politician. But unlike Milner, he refused to become identified with any political party. Scotsmen are known for their courage, and Waverley gave good proof of his; but they are seldom prepared to "damn the consequences."

### Zeta

**A**S we go to press simultaneous announcements in Britain and the United States have restored to Western scientists some of the prestige which they lost when the Russians launched their first Sputnik. Experiments have been made with thermo-nuclear apparatus (the British machine at Harwell is called Zeta) in the course of which very high temperatures have been produced and sustained for some thousandths of a second. According to Sir John Cockcroft, it may be possible to harness thermo-nuclear energy for peaceful purposes within twenty or thirty years, or conceivably in ten years from now. A new, relatively economic and virtually limitless source of power may thus be within our reach.

While invidious comparisons between our own effort and the Americans' are ruled out, there can be no harm in quoting Admiral Strauss's comment that Zeta represented better value for money than its American equivalents. £300,000 is indeed a small sum to have spent on a machine which may help to revolutionize the conditions of life on this planet. But while we admire what has been done on so modest a budget, we hope that the Atomic Energy Authority will be well provided with all that it needs in the way of brains and funds in the years ahead. Wherever else the axe may fall, it must not be allowed to arrest our progress towards the peaceful use of thermo-nuclear power.

*N.B. Some of next month's contents are announced on page 75*

# THE IMPACT OF FREE INDIA

By LORD ALTRINCHAM

I HAVE recently had the exciting, disturbing, but on the whole very encouraging experience of visiting India for the first time. As one of a party of journalists (members of the International Press Institute), I went there at the beginning of December and remained for about three weeks. During this time I was able to get a preliminary idea of the country, having seen, however briefly, many aspects of its multitudinous life and having met a number of its leaders, including Mr. Nehru. It now seems to me that the best way to show my gratitude to our Indian hosts is to record my chief impressions with utter frankness, because I am convinced that India is very widely misunderstood by the so-called Western Powers, and the fault for this may lie with those who overpraise no less than with those who seek to disparage and discredit. For my part I am a warm, even a passionate, admirer of what independent India has done and is attempting to do; but I do not intend to flatter, nor will I gloss over the less cheerful sides of the story. India is a very great country indeed, and one of the characteristics of such a country is that it need never be afraid of the truth.

## Democracy in Action

The first point to stress about India is that she is definitely *not* neutral in the Cold War, except in the sense that she refuses to be party to an anti-Communist military pact. The struggle that matters is not between America and Russia, but between democracy and dictatorship; and in that struggle India is foursquare on the side of democracy. Her performance in this respect is all the more remarkable when the basic facts of the case are considered. Vast unemployment, overpopulation, poverty and illiteracy—these are the conditions in which Communism might be expected to thrive. Yet India, with universal suffrage, has many fewer Communists in her Parliament than a highly sophisticated nation like France. In the general election of March 1957 under thirty Communists were returned to the Lok Sabha (House of the People) out of a total membership of over 500. Even in the States (for India is a federation) there is only one Communist Government—in the State of Kerala where, by all accounts, the previous Congress Government was exceptionally bad and the Communists have just managed to gain control, with the support of

Independents. Otherwise the State Governments, like the central Government, are all Congress.

## Revolution by Consent

What are the reasons for this astonishing political stability? There is no doubt that the policy of non-alignment is one of them. By keeping herself ostensibly aloof from the world power struggle, India is in fact making her own decisive contribution to that struggle. This is the paradox which has tended to baffle and confuse the outside world. Like the United States in the period after Independence, and when the frontier was being opened up, India is determined to concentrate upon her own domestic affairs. The Nehru doctrine has much in common with the Monroe doctrine. But whereas American self-absorption was of no direct benefit to the world, the same could not be said of Indian self-absorption. On the contrary, nothing is more vital to the cause of democracy than that India should modernize herself and raise the standards of her people with the least possible delay. The Indian Five-Year Plans are of far greater value to the free world than the Baghdad Pact or S.E.A.T.O. If India's revolution by consent is successful, a genuine balance of power will establish itself between the two main groupings of humanity. If it fails, Communism will sweep the board in Asia, and probably in Africa as well.

The two emotions which reign supreme in India are the desire to assert national independence and the desire for economic development. The first of these manifests itself in the form of a lingering hypersensitivity on the subject of Western colonialism (to which the Americans, thinking themselves automatically "on side" with all anti-colonialists, are apt to pay too little attention) combined with a justifiable pride in India's historic past and in her most recent achievements. The second is a reaction against the state of primitive wretchedness which still prevails throughout the sub-continent. It is thus fairly easy to understand the Indian attitude towards Russia. To us, the Soviet Union appears primarily as a threat to the civilization which we cherish; to the average Indian it is a country which, backward and under-privileged only forty years ago, has by its own efforts become one of the two greatest powers on earth, with

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SLEEPING FIGURES IN A BOMBAY STREET.

*Camera Press.*

industry rapidly expanding and conditions of life steadily improving. Russia has thus already done what Indians hope that their country will be able to do—but with this all-important difference. Indians hope to bring about their economic revolution, as they won their national freedom, by non-violent means. They seek to revolutionize their society, but with the consent and willing co-operation of its members.

### Poverty Unlimited

The scale of the problem has to be seen to be believed. Arriving in India from Ceylon, where human life is sufficiently abundant, one's first impression is of people, people, people. The density of population is terrifying, and the level at which it lives even more so. It is not far wide of the mark to say that the typical Indian is a beggar. Driving through the streets of Bombay in the early hours of the morning I was amazed to see literally thousands of human bodies lying, like corpses, on the pavements and in the gutters. These are the overflow from tenements and hovels which are everywhere bursting with surplus humanity. In the country the position is no better. An Indian village street is like Oxford Street during the rush

hour; except that people tend to be standing, sitting, squatting, or lying, instead of rushing. There is no work for half these people to do. Physical weakness and a habit of idleness may account for some of the inactivity; but in the main it is simply due to lack of opportunity. Families act as miniature welfare states, but there is precious little welfare; only the barest subsistence—and even this is threatened whenever the monsoon fails.

Despite an infant mortality rate of 113 per thousand, and an expectation of life of only thirty-two years, the population of India continues to rise at the rate of about five millions a year. The Government's gargantuan task is to provide food and, if possible, work for all these people. The problem would be stiff enough even if the population would stand still; but there is no hope of this in the present generation, though the birth-rate has marginally declined. Agricultural production must therefore be boosted, industry must be conjured into existence, and foreign aid must be obtained on a very large scale—yet without strings. Development must on no account be financed through a sacrifice of national independence; most Indians feel that this would be too big a price to pay, and their leaders know that if they were to make strategic con-





BUDDHIST TEMPLE CARVED OUT OF THE ROCK AT AJANTA.

cessions in return, say, for American help with the second Five-Year Plan (which is very urgently needed) they would expose themselves to the charge of being Western stooges and so undo at one stroke all the good that they have been laboriously doing.

Another psychological quirk which is thoroughly understandable once one has seen India is the apparent incapacity of Indian leaders to "ask nicely" for the economic help which they need from the West. They are proud men and they do not want to appear in the world as so many of their compatriots appear in their own home towns and villages—with hands outstretched and a heart-rending request for "baksheesh." Besides, they are honestly convinced that the West should give its full support to India quite spontaneously, both on prudential grounds and from a sense of historic justice. They would argue that British and American prosperity was based, in fact, upon the exploitation of countries like India, and while they acknowledge their debt to the West in a staunch defence of Western democratic values, they feel that the West should acknowledge its economic debt to them in kind, without a hint of patronage or con-

descension. This is an attitude which has caused, and may still be causing, a good deal of irritation, but it deserves to be treated with sympathy and a fair measure of respect.

#### "The New India"

Nationalism in an old country may be accompanied and sustained by a reawakening of interest in what has gone before, and Nehru was not the only patriot who, during the struggle for independence, discovered anew the greatness of India's past. And what a past! The Taj Mahal is a comparatively modern building; the more authentic treasures of India are much older. The rock carving and painting, for instance, at Ajanta and Ellora, north-west of Bombay, were a complete revelation to me. At Ellora three religions—Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism—have turned a hill of solid rock into an artist's and archaeologist's paradise. The Buddhists burrowed into the rock and created one temple (among others) which compares in symmetrical beauty with some of the finest Christian churches or Græco-Roman temples. This was done between the 4th and 6th centuries A.D. The Hindus cut downwards at least a hundred feet through the rock and left, as their greatest *tour de force*, a whole temple with sculptured panels of remarkable subtlety and animation. This dates from the 7th century. The Jains' contribution is later in time, and rather less impressive, but the place as a whole leaves an indelible memory. And this is even more true of the caves at Ajanta where, in a remote valley full of monkeys, is to be seen some of the most sensitive and accomplished painting in the world—the work of Buddhist monks between the 3rd century B.C. and the 7th century A.D. The statue of Lord Buddha in the first cave, with an expression sad, reflective or smiling, according to the direction from which light is thrown upon it, is perhaps the most successful attempt by a human hand to contrive a semblance of the superhuman.

But many Indians to-day, while they have become more conscious of their national past, are above all enthusiastic about what they call "the new India." By this they mean the development of their country on modern lines; the growth of such establishments as the Integral Coach Factory at Madras, the undertaking of super-projects like the Bhakra Dam (which will help to irrigate four States, besides providing hydro-electric power), the building of an atomic reactor near Bombay, and the systematic campaign to improve Indian agriculture and to educate the peasants, through the influence of Government officials specially

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trained for the job, in the rudiments of housing, hygiene and family planning. It may be said that the results are so far meagre, compared with the nation's crying needs. It may also be said—and this is more serious—that China is at the moment showing at least some results which are better than India's. But all things considered, the achievement to date is one of which the Indians have very good reason to be proud. Independence for them has not meant just the hauling down of one flag and the hoisting of another, or the onset of a mood of listlessness and nostalgia, as in Ireland; it has acted as a challenge to the constructive instincts of a people which, as the monuments show, has performed miracles in the past and can perform them again.

### How Strong is Hinduism ?

The foundation of Indian life has been the Hindu religion, which comprises both sublime philosophy at one end of the scale and the basest superstition at the other. It must be admitted that the superstition has tended to predominate, and the odious effects of this upon the whole pattern of Indian life have long been notorious. In particular the caste system, and the refusal to kill sacred animals, have acted as a barrier to progress. The second of these evils has so far been approached very gingerly by the authorities, though Nehru has at least dared to denounce it in speech. The former, however, has been tackled in law and, to a measurable extent, in fact. Untouchability has been "abolished"; the practice of it, that is to say, is now a punishable offence. But it is often very difficult for an Untouchable to take action against one Brahmin, when he knows that there are others in the same village who will make his life a burden. Education, rather than legislation, is perhaps the best cure for caste prejudice, and in the new atmosphere which a secularist and socialist Government has created intermarriage between castes, and between different religious groups, is very definitely happening. (The matrimonial advertisements in a paper like the *Hindustan Times* are a good pointer to the social changes which are coming about. Here is one chosen at random: "Beautiful, educated match for Punjabi Brahmin bachelor, 28, M.A., studying Law, Central Govt. service, New Delhi, on Rs. 255/-. Girls in service may also apply. Caste, province no bars . . ." This formula is constantly recurring.) Child marriage is being gradually eliminated, though it is still a common feature of life in rural India. In combating this, as in preaching the virtues of

birth control, the Government has to rely upon its local officers; and it is not surprising that some of the best work in this field is being done by women.

### The Prime Minister

Though India is indeed a democracy, no one could deny that Jawaharlal Nehru is the leader of his people in a sense that few democratic statesmen have ever been. His unique position is due partly to the memory of his personal contribution towards the achievement of independence, and partly to his outstanding political gifts and human qualities. As one man very near the summit of Indian public life expressed it to me: "Gandhi our people revered. Patel they feared. This man (Nehru) they really love."

Why is he so lovable? There is warmth in his character, to be sure, but there is also an aloofness and a proneness to melancholy which could be chilling. It must not be forgotten that about forty of his sixty-eight years have been spent in various states of unnatural isolation. For the first decade of his life he was an only child; in adolescence he was sent to receive an English education at Harrow and at Cambridge; in middle life he had the experience (perhaps rather similar in some respects) of more than ten years in jail; and since 1947 he has occupied what Señor de



FEMALE FIGURE FROM A WALL PAINTING AT AJANTA.



*By courtesy of the Government of India.*

PART OF THE INTEGRAL COACH FACTORY, MADRAS.

Madariaga calls "the awful solitude of leadership." It might therefore be thought strange that he is able to command such genuine affection. The reason, I believe, is fundamentally this: that he trusts his people and is dedicated to their welfare. A Brahmin himself, he has acted as the relentless enemy of caste; privileged in life, he has espoused the cause of the under-privileged; an intellectual, he has asserted the democratic rights of all citizens, literate or illiterate. The Indians are most responsive to disinterested goodness; they are by nature grateful and affectionate. Hence the peculiar bond which exists between them and Nehru.

#### Is he Indispensable ?

Men of genius are irreplaceable, and no one will ever be able to replace Nehru as a man. But this is not to say that he is indispensable as a Prime Minister, or that chaos will follow his disappearance from the scene. I am quite sure that nothing of the kind will happen, though I hope his period of active life will extend beyond the allotted span. He has certainly not outlived his usefulness, though most people would agree that he is working too hard and trying to do too much. He com-

bines the offices of Prime Minister and External Affairs Minister, and it is a pity that he cannot, or will not, entrust foreign affairs to a colleague; though it must be added that his most likely choice, Mr. Krishna Menon, would be unpopular both at home and abroad. (Menon's faculty for making himself disliked is much to be lamented. He has more ability and sincerity than many politicians who are held in high regard.)

There is plenty of talent in the Nehru Government; it is by no means a one-man show. Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari, who not long ago succeeded Mr. Deshmukh as Minister of Finance, is a first-class administrator with a background of business experience. Mr. (or, as most people would still call him, Pandit) Pant, the Home Minister, is a figure respected even by those who consider him a reactionary. If anything were to happen to Nehru to-day, it is quite possible that Pant would be his immediate successor. In the longer term Mr. Morarji Desai's chances are well favoured. He is now Minister of Commerce and Industry, having formerly been Chief Minister of Bombay. There is promise, too, in the junior ranks of Government, though it is too early yet to pick out any individual names.

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### Will India go Communist ?

As I have already shown, the Communist Party is at present a relatively small minority group in India. But there is danger in the fact that it is the most highly organized opposition party, and therefore the logical alternative if Congress should ever suffer an electoral *débâcle* (as sooner or later it surely must). To obviate this threat many thoughtful Indians would like to see Congress split into two camps, the one democratic socialist, the other moderate conservative. Such a broad division of opinion in fact exists within the party, and it is quite likely that a split would already have occurred but for the prestige of Nehru, which makes "right-wing" Congress politicians reluctant to part company with him, just as "right-wing" Republicans find it necessary to adhere to Eisenhower. Thus the eventual disappearance of Nehru may lead to a healthy political development—another reason for not regarding him as indispensable. Meanwhile the champions of democracy outside India must not allow the present regime to lose the confidence of the Indian masses through a failure of financial support for the current Five-Year Plan.

### Will the Country Disintegrate ?

There is much talk of the "fissiparous tendencies" which are to be seen in India; and there are plenty of outside observers, not to mention some Indians, who prophesy with gloomy relish that the country will in due course disintegrate. Yet one of the first and most far-reaching consequences of Independence was the mediatization of the princely States, which put an end to feudal divisions and brought the whole of India within the framework of a centralized modern nation. This has, it is true, a federal constitution, and the component States enjoy fairly wide powers. But they are in no sense autonomous and for most purposes their Governments are obliged to co-operate, as a matter of practical expediency, with the central Government.

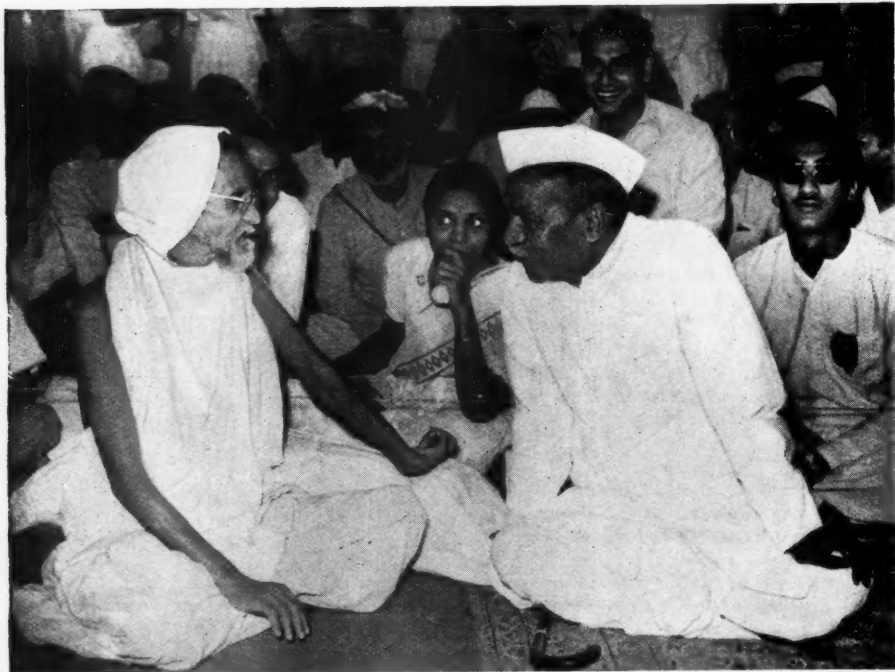
Language is, of course, a very serious problem. At the State level it has been largely solved by forming States to coincide with linguistic groupings (Bengali, Tamil, etc.). But even this local pattern is not yet perfect; in the State of Bombay there is a clash between two languages (Marathi and Gujarati) and it is probable that this State will have to be subdivided, though the disposal of the city of Bombay is a very vexed question. At the national level the problem is at its most acute. The Government's policy has been to announce that Hindi must, within a few years,



Camera Press.

MR. T. T. KRISHNAMACHARI.

become the sole official language of the Indian Union. But Hindi is, in fact, no more than a glorified local language, though it is spoken by about 120 million Indians. In the South there is very strong resistance to the imposition of Hindi and an equally strong demand that English should be retained as an alternative national language. (I could understand the South's predicament while I was listening from the Gallery to Question Time in the Lok Sabha. A question had been put to the Finance Minister which, since it was in English on the Order Paper, he could answer in English. But when a supplementary question was put to him in Hindi the Minister, who is a Madrasite, was unable to answer it himself, and his Under-Secretary had to take over). It would not surprise me if Nehru were soon to accede graciously to the South's demand. By doing so he would be showing his usual intuitive finesse as a statesman. If he, who thinks, speaks and dreams in English, had seemed to be thrusting English forward at the outset—a language which, though most Indians recognize its utility, is actually spoken by only a tiny fraction of them, and has traumatic associations for the fervid nationalist—he would have been fair game for his political enemies. As it is, he can claim to have done his best to oust English, but to have been



*By courtesy of the Government of India.*

PRESIDENT RAJENDRA PRASAD (RIGHT) TALKS TO VINOBA BHAVE (LEFT).

forced, by popular pressure, to give it a reprieve.

One major factor making for unity in India is the very existence of Pakistan. This point is too often overlooked by those who regard partition as an unqualified disaster. If foreigners are amazed at the obsession which Indians have about Pakistan, they should remember that the last conquerors of India before the British were the Mohammedans. This should be borne in mind whenever the subject of Kashmir comes up, because to Indians Kashmir is not a matter of reason or calculated policy; it involves very deep emotions, which no Indian Government could afford to ignore.

#### The Neo-Primitives

Another potential threat to India, or at any rate to "the new India," is what may be termed the neo-primitive movement, which is a too literal and generalized application of Gandhian principles. The high priest of this movement is Vinoba Bhave, who has recently been joined by J. P. Narain. According to some Narain is a future Prime Minister; according to others (whose view I find more

convincing) he is a man who has always backed the wrong horse and is now doing so again. By this I do not mean that the Bhave movement is of no value; on the contrary, I think it has already done some good, and may do more, in stimulating a sense of community in Indian villages and promoting farm co-operatives to take the place of landlordism. But the attack on industrialization and on what is called "giganticism" (i.e. presumably large-scale projects like the Bhakra dam) is sheer cloud-cuckoo.

Nehru and his enlightened colleagues have been careful not to antagonize these misguided enthusiasts. They have realized that the best way to limit the effectiveness of any heretical movement is to give it official support, and they also appreciate its finer points. On the whole I should say that the Indians of to-day are no more likely to be carried away by the doctrines of Bhave than the late Victorians were to succumb to the doctrines of William Morris. When the example of Gandhi is cited, Nehru argues forcefully that the Mahatma was never opposed to modern techniques when they could be shown to be in the interest of his people. He told them to



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spin, because at that moment in their history they needed the discipline and self-respect which this simple form of work could give them; also the few extra annas which they were thus able to earn. But he never intended that they should be kept in an artificial state of primitiveness. (It is a measure, by the way, of Gandhi's supreme influence that both sides in this controversy seek to be in harmony with his thinking.)

### The Commonwealth Link

The Commonwealth as it now is may justly be described as an Indian invention. If this fact were more widely understood by Indians themselves there would be less uncertainty about the Commonwealth link. Unfortunately many of them still regard the Commonwealth as a continuation of the British Empire by other means; and it is hard to doubt that, but for Nehru's loyalty to what he conceives to be a new and very hopeful idea, India would by now have ceased to be a member.

The French, however, have a good saying: "*ce n'est que le provisoire qui dure.*" And if the Commonwealth link has survived the first ten years of independence, it should be able to survive indefinitely. But such institutional links, like human friendships, should be kept in constant repair; and we in Britain must ask ourselves if we are doing enough to make the Commonwealth a reality, so far as India is concerned. A very pertinent question was raised in the *Observer* on January 12 by K. M. Panikkar, the distinguished Indian author and diplomatist. "It is in the interest of both countries that steps should be taken now to maintain the intellectual collaboration between the *élite* of India and Britain. . . . What is needed in India to-day is an organization not created by Governments, which would express in an obviously genuine form the desire of the learned classes in Britain and India to revive their informal intimacy of the past . . . a British School might surely be set up in Delhi . . . India would welcome the establishment of such a School if it was conceived as a centre to which British scholars . . . might be attached for one or two years. . . . India's willingness to give it a welcome might take the form of contributions from private sources to meet the foundation expenses; help might also be given in finding premises." Such a straight hint, from such a responsible quarter, will surely not pass unnoticed. What Mr. Panikkar suggests is a good example of what could and should be done to strengthen the normal working contacts between India and other Commonwealth countries.

### A Dynamic Relationship

From opposite sides of the road in Bangalore two figures confront one another—two statues which seem, in some odd and symbolic way, to be alive. One is of Queen Victoria, looking her most stuffy and regal; the other of Mahatma Gandhi, wearing his loincloth. At first one is tempted to accept the symbolism of these figures too simply; to interpret the confrontation as one between Britain and India, between monarchy and democracy, between East and West, and so on. Then gradually, as one reflects, a more subtle significance is brought home to one. Are the figures really so contradictory? Are they not perhaps complementary? Is it not true that most Indians find something to admire in what Queen Victoria stood for, and that most Englishmen find a great deal to admire in what Mahatma Gandhi stood for? Politically, morally, institutionally, even ethnically, there is much in common between the two countries—more than either is usually willing to admit. And it is often the similarities, no less than the differences, which can lead us into conflict and disagreement.

Such a relationship has been brilliantly described by William Clark in his recent book *Less Than Kin* (Hamish Hamilton, 16s.). He was writing of Anglo-American relations, but much of what he says is applicable to Anglo-Indian relations. In the piece which follows Mr. Clark suggests that India is still too sensitive to criticism, and too loath to criticize herself, to partake in the ceaseless dialectic which gives the Atlantic community its vitality. I would venture to question the justice of this opinion. No doubt India is sensitive (as we and the Americans are too, if the truth be told) but people only resent criticism when they feel that it might be valid, or when, having some initial respect for the critic, they feel that it is unworthy. When we criticize the Indians, or when they criticize us, definite pain is caused; and this pain is a proof of the organic and dynamic relationship between us.

The future will not, therefore, be just a matter of garlands and good-natured platitudes. There will be much argument and occasional bitterness. But Anglo-Indian affairs are likely to be as important to the world, and to ourselves, as Anglo-American affairs. Let us hope that a statue of Gandhi will soon join that of George Washington outside the National Gallery.

ALTRINCHAM.



# PROBLEMS OF A WESTERN CORRESPONDENT IN INDIA\*

By WILLIAM CLARK

THE first thing that struck me when I arrived in India as a correspondent was that there seemed so much that was vitally interesting from day to day. I also very soon discovered that if you write it as a day-to-day news story it does not get published. The reason, I learnt, was quite simple: for the first time in my life I was living and reporting from outside the Atlantic community. There is a community of thought and interest that spans the Atlantic, and there is also a certain news community there. That is to say, there are running stories of constant interest which will, without any very great difficulty, get into the British Press or into the Press of any country in the community. If you ask me to define exactly what the Atlantic community is—Does it include Australia? Does it include Portugal?—it is difficult to answer. But it is not too difficult to say broadly that there is this Atlantic community within which there exists a common news interest. India does not belong to that community. This is a misfortune for everyone, and something for which the West deserves a certain amount of blame. It is a pity from our own point of view that we do not recognize fully the community of interest which exists between ourselves and various countries of Asia. I would like to make the readers in Britain feel that what happened in India, Pakistan and Ceylon was of real interest and real importance to them.

If there is going to be a community that includes a large part of Asia, at least free Asia, we must recognize that community of interest means community of criticism. The Atlantic community, particularly the Anglo-American community, exists as the main dynamic of the Western world to-day, because it enjoys fairly free criticism between the two countries. We are helped by the existence of a common language, which can also help us in our relationship with this part of Asia. Each of us can understand, if we care to, what the other is saying. This means that we have a capacity for mutually beneficial criticism. I do not mean criticism only of a hostile kind, but, for instance, criticism here of Britain for not recognizing its interest in India; criticism of India in Britain for not recognizing how to

express her community of interest with the West. Only when that sort of criticism takes place easily, without rancour, and with the object of improving relations, will we know that there is a genuine community of interest. As long as there is a feeling that we must pull our punches, that we must be polite to each other all the time, it will be clear that we are just acquaintances, not relatives dealing with common problems.

What are the problems I have so far found in trying to achieve this objective—this rather high-sounding objective of making people realize the community of interest between India and the West? First of all there is actual lack of familiarity with the problems involved; but that is a difficulty which only involves more careful writing. And, since there is almost never any hurry to get such stories across, one should have time to do the thinking and background research which is necessary in order to give the explanation.

The other result of unfamiliarity with India's problems, and the problems of Asia, is a tendency to deal with that one aspect of affairs which is most easily understood abroad, namely, foreign policy. If you write that Mr. Nehru has stated that the British ought to get out of Oman, your sub-editor has heard about Oman, he has heard about Mr. Nehru—two points in favour of the story. But if you say that once again there is going to be a failure of the Aghani crop in Bihar the sub-editor has not heard of either subject or place, and he doesn't care—three strikes against the story. So the foreign policy aspect of Indian affairs is the easiest one on which to report back home.

But it is also the one which has done by far the most harm to any understanding of this country by the West. The fault is not entirely ours. It so happens that India's foreign policies do not appeal very greatly to the West—particularly the basic policy of non-alignment, which seems to Western eyes to

\* This article is based upon a speech by William Clark at the International Press Institute's Conference at Kandy last November—a speech to which those present, ourselves included, listened with special interest.—EDITOR.

## PROBLEMS OF A WESTERN CORRESPONDENT IN INDIA

involve hedging on crucial issues. The fact which is not understood and not put across by the Press is how marginal foreign policy is as part of the Indian scene. That is something we have failed to make clear. I would, however, say again that the fault is not entirely ours. When the Prime Minister of India went on tour in the early summer of 1957 he gave a Press conference in every country that he went to, all of which were duly reported in full in the Indian Press. In the course of that time he gave his views on every conceivable aspect of everyone's foreign policy and only once or twice mentioned, almost casually, some of the domestic problems of India. He never once devoted his own opening remarks to that problem. Now I am aware that it is extremely difficult in India, and sometimes unwise, to criticize Mr. Nehru directly (I do not want to become an Oriental Altrincham), but I think it is necessary to point out that there is a great deal of fault to be found with the Indian Government, and with the whole presentation of the news that it makes.

Yet, I also ought to add that it was Mr. Nehru himself who said to me in my first week in Delhi, "I hope that you won't spend all your time writing about foreign affairs, but do something about our domestic affairs, which are of far greater interest and importance to you in Britain." I am no statistician, but I looked through my own stories from here and found that more than three-quarters of them dealt with the domestic affairs of India (I include amongst the domestic affairs Kashmir). How easy has that been? What are the difficulties?

One needs passes to go to many parts of India. You need a pass for Kashmir, you need a pass (which you cannot get) to go to Bhutan. You need a pass (which again you cannot get) to go to Ladakh. Well, I daresay it is wise to keep all these frontier areas behind an iron curtain. It is, however, extremely irritating. I myself tried to go to Sikkim (admittedly in a hurry, but journalists tend to be in a hurry) not long ago and applied for a pass through the District Commissioner in Darjeeling, who said to me: "I don't intend to expedite this. Anyway, we don't much want you journalist chaps going up there and causing a lot of trouble." There are Blimps on both sides of the Arabian Sea, and Blimps are no better for being Indian than they are for being British. There are rather a lot of them concerned with the issue of passes, and I think one tends to run into trouble about that. I would only ask the Indians themselves to consider this particular point. Is it true to

say that the right to enter Kashmir is never considered in terms of what you will write when you get there?

Sensitiveness to criticism is another difficulty. I think that the British suffer rather particularly from this Indian sensitivity because, not unnaturally, there is the thought that when we criticize we are doing it from our old "superior" position. I believe that the British have to get out of the habit of behaving that way, and the Indians have got to get out of the habit of thinking that way. There is something to be done on both sides. Since I am not any longer a diplomat or an official I can speak frankly, and, really, if journalists do not speak frankly to each other, but talk like diplomats, we shall very soon have lost the freedom of the Press that we are always talking about.

One other difficulty about Indian sensitivity that I have tended to find is that awkward matters are not fully enough discussed in the Indian Press. For instance, what is the real Indian domestic story? It is in my opinion one of the most thrilling ones in the whole world to-day. It is this attempt to carry out a century's evolution by consent; the attempt to change the way of life of nearly 400 million people; to change their whole outlook; to make an intensely theocratic people, secular; to make a people scientific, who are by long tradition superstitious; to make a people with strong anti-egalitarian attitudes, socialist, which really only means egalitarian. The revolution that Mr. Nehru has in mind is a revolution far greater than that of Ataturk or anyone like that.

This is a very dramatic story, very dramatic indeed. Perhaps we correspondents have rather failed in making the drama understood around the world. But is it entirely our fault? Is our failure to understand Asia entirely to be blamed on us? Is it not partly that Asia does not understand Asia? I feel strongly that India itself has very little sense of the nature of its own mission. It talks quite a lot about its mission, but it does not really have any clear idea of what it is trying to do. And one of the reasons for this is the failure of Indians to be critical about what is going on in their own country.

It is natural in a country which has had political freedom for only ten years, and I point it out because I think that it may be helpful if people do recognize some of their defects. Of course it may be better, as has been suggested, to leave it entirely to Asians to point out defects to Asians. But in that case you cannot help agreeing that Asia is

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not part of the community to which I have been referring. If I, as a European, have not the right to offer criticism, then you cannot be surprised if Europeans are not interested in the affairs of Asia.

I think that the old definition given by an American of the function of the Press, which was "to print the news and raise hell," should be emblazoned in neon signs, if not letters of fire, over editorial desks throughout the Indian sub-continent. I do not think there is enough hell-raising in the Indian Press. I will give two examples. Something has gone very radically wrong with the second Five-Year Plan. This may be partly the fault of the planners for "planning" a gap of several hundred million rupees. But what is certain is that as a result something is going to have to be done; the Plan is going to have to be drastically pruned, and so on. In all newspapers that I have read on this there has hardly been any clear constructive criticism, no answers to the questions: What went wrong? What are we going to do next? What is the core of the Plan? What shall we try and save? I cannot help comparing this with the Press discussion that took place in 1948-49 in Britain when we were in exactly the same fix as India is to-day; when we had over-extended ourselves; when we were about to go bankrupt; before we were saved by the Marshall Plan. Then there was the most passionate discussion in the British Press about what had gone wrong, who was to blame, and how to get out of the mess we were in.

One of the things we must never forget is that discretion is the vice of the responsible Press, just as sensationalism is the vice of the popular Press. Don't let us be too discreet; don't let us who are trying to interpret Asia to Europe be *afraid* to tread on any toes. There are some toes that are not well trodden on, but there are some that are in the wrong place and need to be well and truly trodden on.

Now for one other example of the failings of the local Press, I would take the riots in Madras. I called one of my stories "Tale of Two Cities": the two cities being Little Rock and Ramanathapuram. In the race troubles at Little Rock, Arkansas, no one was killed; in the caste riots in Ramanathapuram, Madras, forty people were killed. But I have yet to find any British journalist visiting India who has heard of Ramanathapuram. There was, admittedly, quite a lot written about it afterwards in the Indian Press. At the time,

though, I noticed that there was no special correspondent there, and no special correspondents were sent there. Only the local correspondents, ten or twelve days afterwards, did begin to comment on it; and I must say that the Indian Press have been extremely critical of the whole episode. It was a dramatic and very interesting event and one which was (like Little Rock) a sign of the difficulties that occur when you make progress—you would not have had that trouble if you had not tried to abolish the caste system. But there was so little about it that was at all readable or dramatic in the Indian Press, that it was very difficult for us to send back to Britain interpretive stories that were dramatic or intelligible. There was very much less material available than that provided by the hordes of correspondents, television cameras, radio people, and so on that poured into Little Rock.

In trying to see where we foreign correspondents fit into the sort of world we are all trying to build, we should never forget that the Press is not the same thing as the Government; that we are not here to be diplomatic; we are not here to avoid at all costs causing pain or difficulty. If we cause pain because we say silly things, or because we do not check our facts, we are being bad journalists. If we cause pain because we are right—because we are saying that the Emperor has no clothes and he has not had any for a long time—we are performing a proper function, even if we are doing it across a national boundary. The alternative is to recognize that national boundaries are absolute, that one shouldn't criticize across them. If you once do that then you will have to admit that there is no community of interest between such countries. And in that case there is not going to be much mutual interest between them.

I like to think of Asia and Europe coming together more and more closely as a single community in which there is intelligent criticism, as part of a great debate—a debate between the Europeans with their long experience and their past mistakes on the one hand, and on the other, Asia with its great problems but with our experience to draw on, and so the possibility of not making all our mistakes again. It is to that kind of debate that I think the Press and correspondents can contribute, if they are free and use their freedom, as they can, to indulge in international debate.

WILLIAM CLARK.

# CELEBRATIONS WHOLESALE

By DENYS SMITH

**Y**OUR lucky American need never wake up with that blue feeling which comes from thinking there is another uneventful day ahead. Any day of the year there are from six to a dozen things he should be celebrating if he will study almost any almanack, and in particular a calendar produced by the American Chamber of Commerce "to aid businessmen and civic groups to tie-in their advertising and promotion plans with established observances." January, for example, being the month which followed Christmas food and New Year celebration, was "Sick-room Needs Month" at the suggestion of the Retail Druggists. Those who entered into the spirit of the thing stocked up with aspirin and iodine and spiced their conversation with hints to friends that they looked awful and should really try a tonic. The nation's bakers also hoped to catch people on the rebound. Those who made new year resolutions that they would follow a healthier diet were reminded that it was "Wheat Bread Sales Month."

In short, the "established observances" are often established by interested parties. People must sometimes look back wistfully to the good old times when days to celebrate were established by long tradition and were few and far between. It all started back in 1906 when a Miss Jarvis of Philadelphia, who was devoted to her mother, proposed that the second Sunday in May, when she died, should be observed annually by everyone as Mother's Day. In two years she had convinced the city that the idea was a good one; by 1911, the entire nation. In 1914 Congress made it a national holiday. Before long it dawned on people that a Father was just as necessary as a Mother. President Coolidge in 1924 endorsed the idea of Father's Day each third Sunday in June. Congress made it official in 1936. The florists, the greeting card printers and shops of all kinds saw the advantage of having additional special occasions to celebrate. Commercially inspired observances multiplied. So did those inspired by social, educational and charitable groups seeking publicity not profit. The Government, too, moved in with a number of days and weeks formally announced by Presidential proclamation. Among these are Maritime Day, sponsored by the Merchant Marine Institute; Farm Safety Week, sponsored by the Agri-

culture Department and World Trade Week by the Commerce Department. Then the humorists entered the picture. One such organization sponsored Mother-in-law Day and a rival group Father-in-law Day, "to pay tribute to the guy who made Mother-in-law Day possible." The year became too small to accommodate all the observances. In defiance of the calendar, for example, January had eleven weeks. Last month in fact was an excellent one for the conscientious observance keeper—rich, varied and imaginative, not to speak of puzzling. What could one think of "Odorless Decoration Week" after reading the New Year Honours List, except that some people believed outside pressure was needed to keep honours and decorations untainted? But this was America, so the phrase had nothing to do with public morality but with house decorating. It was a reminder that though it was too cold to open the windows and let out the smell you could still have the painters in if they used odourless paint. Evidently these special weeks are sometimes not quite what they seem. Surely January's "Save the Pun Week" could not mean just that? Were puns in danger of vanishing? If so why not let them. But it did. One of those humorous groups wanted "to restore the pun to its rightful place in American humour." Well, a lot depends upon what is considered its rightful place, and one's opinion of American humour.

With "Take Tea and See Week," coming after "Save a Pun Week," care was needed to avoid remarks like "Take Whiskey and See Double." There was a National Franklin Thrift Day (the Franklin being Benjamin Franklin reputed to have been a careful soul, not Franklin Roosevelt, regarded, politically speaking, as a spendthrift) followed at once by "Large (Economy) Size Week." This slogan, invented by the food industry, is to put it as simply as possible a bait to make the unwary customer buy more than he needs on the grounds that if he did need it he would save money by spending a little less than twice as much as he had thought of spending. Naturally the Large (Economy) Size Week consisted of ten days.

This month (February) you have no further need for January's austere diet and can celebrate "Good Breakfast Month"—and so



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please the American Baker's Association. (Do not confuse it with September "The Better Breakfast Month" sponsored by the Cereal Institute. Bread is good, but porridge or corn flakes are evidently better.) These hearty breakfasts will not exactly fit in with "National Weight-watcher's Week." In fact, the conscientious calendar-watcher, worried by so many things to observe, might consider that the two cancel out and so observe neither without feeling he was cheating. February 14, Valentine's Day, devoted to Cupid's victims, is balanced by February 28, Bachelor's Day, to honour those who escaped; but the fine Italian hand of the greeting card manufacturer is behind both days. February 22 is Washington's birthday, which of course reminds people of the cherries which would have grown on the tree Parton Weems insisted young George cut down and could not tell his father a lie about. So throughout the following week people are asked to honour Washington's memory, and help the cherry growers, by eating cherries.

By the time March comes along we are in Lent, so it is "One Dish Meals with Cheese Month." In case you get bored by the monotony and your expression shows it you will soon come to "National Smile Week." This week, March 9-15, will also be helpful to husbands, for it starts the day following the Spring Millinery Openings. The promoters disown any such earthy motives. All they want ("they" being the greeting card publishers again) is "to stimulate the remembering of friends and loved ones with cheery greeting cards. "They" are realists and do not expect people to smile after March 15, the date on which income tax returns are due.

March 17 is St. Patrick's Day and the start of Irish Linen Week. The Irish Linen Guild, which sponsors the week, are evidently a little worried since St. Patrick is not usually associated with Northern Ireland where the linen comes from. So the observance is listed "tentative." Deception, it will now be clear, lurks behind many of these occasions. The last two weeks of the month are National Children's Week and Allied Youth Week. The first is to encourage parents to give their children gifts (it's a long time since Christmas and the toy shop business has grown slack). The second is even more misleading for there is nothing international about it. A temperance organization sponsors it "to promote reliable education about alcohol and adolescents."

We are reminded in April, however, that idleness, not drink, is more likely to lead the

young astray. This month includes a Hobby Week "to help cure juvenile delinquency." It also contains "Honey for Breakfast Week" and "National Noise Abatement Week" which run concurrently. After spending a week watching people eat honey quietly at breakfast you can relax and celebrate "National Laugh Week."

May 1, the day for red celebrations, is defiantly picked as "National Young Republicans Day." It is also the start of "Correct Posture Week," relating to physical, not political, posture. The whole month is "Better Bedding Time," a phrase which might well be misinterpreted. After all, spring has come and thoughts naturally turn, say, to transplanting those seedlings to the garden bed with that good southern exposure. But the beds in question are the household variety and the idea is to get the customers interested in buying new mattresses. The usual conflicting celebrations are suggested for the month, which is both National Tavern Month and National Water System Month (the liquor trade versus the pump manufacturers). Let's combine them again and have a whiskey and water!

June contains the complementary "Safe Boating" and "Swim for Health" weeks so why not combine them, too, into "Learn to Swim for Safe-boating Week." June 15, Father's Day, coincides with the start of National Bow Tie Week. (Give father one as a present.) The day before Father's Day is "Expectant Father's Day" sponsored by one of those tiresome humorous organizations. June is the traditional months for weddings, but nobody has thought of sponsoring a "Let's Get Married Week." In fact, there are many obvious gaps throughout the year. There is no "Be Kind to Dulles Day." It might suitably be held during Foot Health Week (May 9-16); after all if you frequently put your foot in your mouth it had better be healthy.

Summer has now come and people's minds are occupied with vacations, so the pickings are pretty thin in July and August. July is "Hot Dog Month," "Iced Tea Time" and "Picnic Month," which might well be amalgamated into "Have a Picnic with Hot Dogs and Iced Tea Month"—not a bad combination. In August you could dress a little more casually for your outings and celebrate "National Denim Week" (to encourage the wearing of blue jeans). You are probably tired of hot dogs by now so you celebrate August as "National Sandwich Month." "National Canned Salmon," the observance



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for the final week, will fit nicely into the sandwich, even if "National Mayonnaise Week" was back in June.

After Labour Day, the first Monday in September each year, summer is over even if the thermometer refuses to recognize the fact. So the days and weeks to celebrate expand again. It is "Better Breakfast Month" (February was Good Breakfast Month) and the weight-watchers who celebrated (if that is the right word) in February can observe it as "Protein Bread Sales Month," a product which is not fattening for two reasons. It has few carbohydrates and it has a taste which discourages a second slice. The "Autumn Millinery Openings" begin on September 7. The thrifty (or skin-flint) husband this time does not merely have to try and smile. He reminds his wife that it is "National Make it Yourself with Wool Week." There is also a "Home Fashion Week" later in the month, but this turns out to be a reference to furniture and curtains. The third week of September is "National Dog," and also "National Tie Week." There is another possible amalgamation here, "Tie Up Your Dog Week," which the Postman's Union might be persuaded to sponsor.

October is a jam-packed month. You can celebrate pretty nearly everything edible except jam. But there is honey—also cheese, rice, pizza, wine, "kraut pork n' apple dinner," donuts (so spelled), popcorn and pretzels. Your food bill is bound to rise so that you will find a real need for National Thrift Week (19th–25th). The same week is "Pass the Laugh Week," which does not mean be thrifty with laughs, or pass them up, but pass them along. So if the number of people overheard saying "Have you heard the one about . . ." or "This reminds me of a story," seems even more numerous than usual you will know the reason. There are other intriguing things to celebrate this month such as "Save the Horse

Week" sponsored by the *Denver Post* "to honour horses (and mules) for what they mean to this country and the world." There is also the "Sweetest Day" on which you "make someone happy through a letter, visit, some act of kindness or some small gift." Those altruistic fellows the retail confectioners thought of that one, the cynics, counting on human laziness to choose the gift rather than write the letter or pay the visit.

The selections for November slacken off a little. "American Education Week" is tactfully placed after November 4, Election Day. The previous month's "Save the Horse Week" has its counterpart in "Save a Wife Week" (November 13–22). A firm of household appliance makers once used the advertising slogan, "Don't kill your wife with overwork. Let us do it for you." But the week is actually sponsored by the paper plate manufacturers. The week should appeal to a certain politician who had as his opponent a notorious lady-killer, metaphorically speaking of course. He coined a mock slogan for his rival, parodying a "Safe Driving Week" slogan, "Send me away to Congress. The wife you save may be your own." The 16th–23rd is "National Long Underwear Week" sponsored by a Wisconsin firm. Let nobody say American business is pessimistic. This is followed by "Know Your America Week." One thing to know about America is that Americans are not on the whole long-underwear-minded. Finally we come to December, good old "Holiday Butter Cookie Time," sponsored by the dairy industry "to promote the use of butter in holiday baking"—and, by jove, we nearly forgot, good old Christmas time as well. In the Chamber of Commerce calendar Christmas Day is carefully annotated "religious" just in case people fell into the pardonable error of thinking the greeting card trade had thought it up all by themselves.

DENYS SMITH.

## PLUS ÇA CHANGE, PLUS C'EST LA MEMSAHIB

By **TRIX**

**T**RIX'S great-grandfather, believe this or not, was a progressive man, at least he saw no reason for discouraging a means of progress which would enable him to dine

comfortably at home on August 10 every year, catch the night express at Verney Junction and arrive in Inverness by the evening of August 11. But whatever his motives (and

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one supposes they were also mercenary) in allowing the Great Midland Railway Company to lay its line through 2,000 acres of young beech plantation, I doubt whether the idea of providing his great-grandson with a copy of the *Spectator* every Thursday night was among them. However

the best of all our actions tend  
to the preposterousest end

and one preposterous end of my great-grandfather's passion for shooting grouse has been that, in return for a haunch of venison, a brace of widgeon, a salmon or whatever is in season, the engine driver of the "Flying Scot" buys a copy of the new *Spectator* at King's Cross and, having read it himself, chucks it over the freestone boundary wall (sadly in need of repair) where my acres happen to march with those of British Railways. From which spot, as a rule, I collect it when I take my late ride round to discourage the alumni of the local approved school from snaring my pheasants. Or, if I am too busy going through the Battalion impress account that evening, one of the gamekeepers collects it for me and brings it up to the house. By one means or another, then, a fresh if moist copy of the *Spectator* arrives in my study late every Thursday night. Before turning in, I light a last pipe and scoff the menu greedily from cover to cover. The first item I chew over, after digesting Pharos and Taper and the correspondence columns and the literary reviews and Custos' financial notes, is that lightly buttered and deliciously crisp waffle which appears above the signature "Strix."

Trix. . . . Strix. . . . The similarity of the two names immediately struck me, when I first came across the feature. As the *Spectator* had recently given undergraduates a foothold in its columns and as my own jottings in the *Sporting and Dramatic*, the *Field*, *Country Life* and so forth were being widely read at the time whenever two or three tweedy people gathered together over crumpets and a log fire at the end of the day's sport, I at first suspected a leg-pull. But when, shortly afterwards, I retired from public life Strix continued, and happily still continues, as a full-blooded personality in his own right. I have spent many pleasant hours speculating on the true identity of this iron man behind a velvet mask.

I supposed it was a man? No woman, surely, would have that careless mastery of the male world, could throw out casual references in passing to war-time Cabinet secrets, to the breeding habits of salmon and

Chinese Generals and so on. No, of course Strix was a man, I decided. The pseudonym itself said as much. All ix endings were masculine were they not? Something about

fornix, phoenix and calix. . .

The word meant a screech owl, I dimly remembered, a male bird if ever there was one, though I was puzzled why so quiet-mannered an author should choose to be represented by so strident a symbol. For he was, I gathered, someone not only after my own heart but, if I may say this without immodesty, after my own stamp; that is a man of culture, of common sense and of property, carrying a fair amount of erudition and an amazing amount of general knowledge as lightly as his shooting stick, but too busy wielding rod, gun and pen to have much use for current political controversies and more at home with left-wing movements on the battlefield, than in Art. I pictured him as the sort of man who can say curtly to a chap "Shut-up" and the chap shuts up, as a smoker of ancient pipes, a wearer of ancient tweeds (bought of course originally in Savile Row but now under daily threat of requisition by his wife for the Women's Institute jumble sale); not horsey in the pejorative sense but certainly one who would be nettled if you cast aspersions on his seat; as shrewd and tolerant, if a bit aloof; a bit cynical if seldom directly malicious (indeed only once so, that I recall, when there was some doubt as to the authenticity of somebody else's long walk).

In short, I saw Strix as an endearing and middle-aged combination of the best type of public schoolboy prefect with the best type of undergraduate. A first leader of men in wartime and a Fourth Leader of the Times in peace. And I was dead wrong.

It was the Russian satellite which, by accidentally reviving a long-buried memory, started me off on the solution of the Strix problem.

An unavoidable drawback to the life of a man whose daily care is bounded by a few, and ever dwindling, paternal acres is never to have time to read any newspaper more topical than *The Farmer and Stockbreeder*; consequently the Sputnik had travelled two hundred times round the earth before I heard it mentioned (by a hedger to a ditcher). Even then I at first imagined the reference was to a small caravanserai, or *tavñ*, of that name on the Sino-Siberian frontier, where I passed a week in 1931, snowbound with a crate of Oxford sausages, a pickled tongue from Fortnum and Mason's and Miss Frieda Lemming.



(Mauvaises langues wagged afterwards as they will and to injure my reputation further Miss Lemming accused me in a book of eating more than my fair share of this one.)

Ah me, Sputnik. . . . My old comrade in arms also accused me, so I'm told, of eating more than my fair share of the sausages. All I myself can remember of that week is arguing for seven days and nights (sleep being out of the question) as to the right and wrong way of producing Ibsen and whether her Schneider 301 or my Mauser 27 was the better adjusted instrument for shooting ibex. The Ibsen argument remained unsolved, but it so happened that when the weather broke and we emerged from the *tavn*, an ibex bounded away from where it must have been sheltering in the porch. Miss Lemming fired point blank and missed. I got it with my Mauser at 500 yards. After that she shut up, on that point, for the rest of the *trek* and we stuck to Ibsen when we were not sticking to our Bactrian camels. As, ever gallant, I subsequently made clear in my book, Miss Lemming proved an ideal companion, apart from her aggressively maintained conviction, due I fancy to her double First in Greats, that anything I could do she could do better, a conviction which even 2,000 miles across Central Asia did nothing to weaken.

But if we could not agree which of our two seats on a camel was the better, there was no question by the end which of them was the harder. When I took leave of Miss Lemming she was lying on an air cushion in the little caravanserai, or *pub*, at Bashibazuk.

"Alright Trix," she snarled—for she was in great pain. "You win, for now. But someday, somehow, I'll jolly well go one better than you yet in your own field. You just wait and see."

Assuming she referred to the field of hazardous travel, I protested that there was nowhere much left to go until the scientists opened up Space.

"There are other and subtler fields where the male still dominates and can be defeated," she snarled once more, with all the fire of a Girton graduate. Then she fainted.

We did not meet again. Though, before the war, I sometimes saw her books advertised and even reviewed one I believe, I am ashamed to admit I never read them. After the war, publishers' announcements gave me news of her recent exploits with the Maquis and later again I heard she had become a tremendous lion at literary parties. But for many years I had ceased to hear or think of her at all.

It happened that for some weeks after the

name Sputnik had re-entered my life, I was much preoccupied with mundane questions of farm management and Brigade manoeuvres. During that time, nevertheless, one of those worrying little feelings, neither quite fear nor doubt, but which can be so troublesome till brought to the surface and identified, gnawed away at the back of my mind. And then last Thursday I got it.

We had had a long day, killing at dusk after a seven-mile point, about twenty miles from home. My horsebox having broken an axle on the way to the Meet, I decided to hack slowly back and to pick up the *Spectator* on the way.

Some hours later, passing a friend's house, I turned aside to scrounge a whisky and soda. The groom led my horse off for a rub down and I entered to find the family crouched in semi-darkness round the evil of our times. And there was Frieda, being interviewed by Mr. John Betjeman.

She was grey now, I noticed, the strong jaw-line more pronounced, but still a magnificent specimen of womanhood, still quivering with sensibility as of yore.

"What fun they were, a trumpet call to us young men of the time," Mr. Betjeman was saying when I came in, "I'm trying to remember the name of your companion in that early one—goodness how bad my memory's getting—you know, the one when you were stuck in the snow for a week before riding across Asia on a yak, or is it a yam?"

Frieda frowned, casting her mind back. "Ah yes," she said sweetly. "I think I know whom you mean. He was called Trix. But he didn't come all the way you know. I had to drop him off. He had an insatiable appetite and since we were desperately short of food . . ."

"I can imagine. And now time also is running short, so do quickly tell us Miss Lemming what made you turn from those wonderful accounts of travel and exploration to your mastery of the long introspective autobiographical novel, to mention only one of your many present activities. I always feel, you know, that in spite of your—if I may say so—charmingly feminine exterior you have a man's mind."

Frieda yawned, holding graceful finger-tips to her mouth. "Yes, I used to want to be a man or at least to do the things men think they do best. Perhaps part of me still does. In fact I'm just back now from writing a series of articles on the crisis in Arabia. Probably

you saw them." She sighed. "But one grows tired of adventure, of the physical things, you know. I suppose I felt there were other and subtler fields for me to conquer than all those interminable uplands and tundras and boulder-strewn plateaux. . . ."

She smiled, triumphantly it seemed, out at me from the flickering box, and I suddenly recalled her words as she lay, all those years ago, on an air cushion.

A power cut denied us the rest of the interview. Gulping down my whisky and soda in the dark, I groped my way out in search of my horse. I was so busy putting two and two together I hardly noticed the next five miles along the by-pass.

"No no, it's fantastic, absurd, it can't be!" I protested aloud.

"And yet, what could be one better than Trix, if not Strix?" I muttered later, puffing at my pipe, and entering the confines of my park. Nearby the "Flying Scot" roared on its way, startling my herd of fallow deer. I put spurs to my horse. There, as usual, lay the latest *Spectator*, hardly damp at all. Striking a match I quickly glanced to see what Strix had been up to this week.

"Few experiences in life are more tedious than the air journey between Aden and Oman. . . ." I thrust the paper into the tail pocket of my pink coat. "But the pseudonym!" I cried. "A double First in Greats and she's made a howler!"

Add to masculines in ix  
Fornix, Phœn . . ."

Or did that mean that ix was usually a feminine ending? I remembered I had an old Kennedy's Latin Primer around somewhere and, by now on tenterhooks, decided to let the theory stand or fall by the answer it supplied. Throwing horsemastership to the winds I galloped the last two miles home across the park.

I found the Kennedy at length in the Estate Office, a well-worn copy, dating from my first half at Eton and scored with various facetiæ, stuck on a dusty shelf between Pegler's "The Book of the Goat" and a rusty elephant rifle. Feverishly I thumbed the distantly familiar pages in search of the information I wanted. I found it alright and the proof, I'm afraid, seems conclusive.

"Strix. Strigis. f. A screech owl," says Kennedy.

JOHN VERNEY.

# CORRESPONDENCE

*To the Editor, National and English Review*

## CULTURE FOR ALL

*From Mr. Elias Bredsdorff*

SIR,

It is with great reluctance that I raise my voice to criticize one of the articles in the January issue devoted to the state of affairs in Scandinavia to-day because I appreciate your efforts in imparting some factual information about Scandinavia; but I do feel that your readers deserve a better account of Scandinavian culture than that given by Miss Stella Zilliacus. It is not so much her superficiality and many sweeping statements that call for a reply as the fact that her article contains a number of factual errors and very misleading statements. The superficiality of her remarks about Scandinavian art and music is evident to anyone who has the slightest knowledge in these fields; she mentions Grieg and Sibelius, but completely forgets Nielsen, and her list of noteworthy Scandinavian artists is, to put it mildly, very arbitrary.

Most fatal of all, however, is her ignorance about Scandinavian literature, especially Norwegian and Danish. She does manage to mention two contemporary Swedish writers, although she spells one of them wrongly; but how she can bracket the work of Selma Lagerlöf and Strindberg is unintelligible to me. Her remarks about the language problem in Norway are utterly misleading; from the context the reader might infer that Bjørnson (not Bjørnsen) and Ibsen used the New Norwegian *landsmal*, whereas in fact they both wrote in a language which was virtually Danish; and anyway, the *landsmal* is something far more complicated than just going back to some primeval Norwegian language. To conclude the paragraph by mentioning Sigrid Undset and Knut Hamsun as "the most renowned Norwegian writers today" is like mentioning Virginia Woolf and H. G. Wells as the most renowned English writers to-day! After all, next year will mark the centenary of Hamsun's birth!

Miss Zilliacus' fourteen line summary of Danish literature is even more misleading. To characterize the period of realism towards the end of the 19th century as a time when "writers expressed an intense despair with the human race" is meaningless nonsense. Is she referring to Brandes, Jacobsen and Pontop-

pidan, the three greatest names of that period? However, she finds consolation in the fact that "in present times there seems to be a return to the more optimistic lyricism, as is shown in the poetry of Holger Drachmann." Holger Drachmann—the most recent Danish author mentioned in an issue devoted to "Scandinavia Today"—was in fact a contemporary of Brandes and died in 1908. It would be like concluding a summary of English literature with the sentence that "in present times there seems to be a return to the more optimistic lyricism, as is shown in the poetry of Swinburne."

In my own article preceding that of Miss Zilliacus I mentioned the "almost universal ignorance in this country about Scandinavian literature." I did not realize then that my article was to be followed by one which gave a sadly renewed evidence of the truth of that statement.

Yours, etc.,

ELIAS BREDSORFF.

*Cambridge.*

January 12, 1958.

*From Mr. Peter Brinson*

DEAR SIR,

I was astonished to read a serious error about Swedish ballet in Miss Zilliacus' article, "Culture for All," in this month's issue of your journal. The director of the Royal Swedish Ballet and the person responsible for the Swedish Ballet School is Miss Mary Skeaping, who was once Ballet Mistress to the Sadler's Wells Company at Covent Garden. Miss Skeaping has been effective director of the company since 1953.

So far as I know, Mr. Gordon Hamilton, whom Miss Zilliacus says is head of the Swedish Ballet School, has never occupied any such position in Sweden nor been associated with the Swedish company. He is in fact director of ballet at the Vienna State Opera House, where he has been for some years.

Yours faithfully,

PETER BRINSON.

*30 Gloucester Place,  
London, W.1.*

January 10, 1958.



## Books: General

# WHITE MAN'S FREEDOM

By JOHN BAYLEY

CONRAD has been in the news lately. Two solid and painstaking works of criticism—both labours of love in their way—indicate the vitality of interest which his work preserves.\* But Kipling, his great contemporary, still has to be content, critically speaking, with a much less copious and reverential treatment—odd essays, usually a little patronizing in tone, and a paragraph or two in treatises on the novel. Yet on the face of it they have much in common, for both are almost our last great representatives of the literature of achievement. They celebrated activity. And they celebrated it at a time when the 19th century confidence in activity and achievement was just being stricken with a gathering self-consciousness about its real aims and its real value.

In a very revealing opening to a speech at a Naval Club in 1908, Kipling remarked that his reputation "was achieved not by doing anything in particular, but by writing stories about things which other men have done." Living among men of action he naturally wrote about them. And he added: "I did not realize then what I realized later, that disciplined men of action, living under authority, constitute a very small portion of our world, and do not attract much of its attention or its interest." This points, I think, though with the reticence we should expect of Kipling, to a loss of confidence in the centrality of his subject, to an awareness that he was celebrating something on its way out, and to that corresponding rather cocky defensiveness which disconcerts us in his later work. Real self-confidence—the sublime self-confidence of Henry James, say, who was genuinely astonished when his friends intimated that the manner and matter of *The Golden Bowl* was perhaps not of a kind to which every bosom would return a compelled and immediate echo—such self-confidence must have been essential to Kipling. And between the time when James, Kipling's close friend and best man at his wedding, was

announcing that his "almost frighteningly talented" protégé was to be the English Balzac, and the time of that speech to the Naval Club, it has somehow got lost.

Both history and the novel were to blame: history, because it was moving steadily away from the centres of Kipling's hope and interest; the novel, because its intelligence was concentrating more and more not on what people did but on what they were like. The balance of the *genre* was being tilted more and more against celebration of achievement and in favour of insight into human behaviour. Kipling was not interested in people as such; for him, as for a sociologist, they were always part of an organism; he wanted to find out their clubs, their debts, how much they paid their cooks—he did not want to know what made them unique as individuals, what was the special privacy of their existence. His famous praise to Allah for the diversity of his creatures is a sociologist's enthusiasm. Nor can it be argued that a novelist like Trollope resembles him here: Archdeacon Grantly, and still more the Reverend Crawley, are entirely peculiar as individuals as well as being representative Anglican animals. Strickland and Disko Troop are every Indian policeman, every Grand Banks skipper, and they are nothing else. Of course, this is an aspect of their excellence, but there are many occasions—particularly in his later work—when Kipling's indifference to the existence of his characters becomes a dire impoverishment. To take a tiny example from a story usually thought of as a success, Mrs. M'Leod in *The House Surgeon* is a Greek lady "with eyes, like currants in dough." Apart from a few conventionally Levantine groans and exclamations that is all we hear of her. But she is the mistress of the haunted house and she must surely have some reaction to the things that are going on in it? M'Leod himself, who of course knows more about furs than anyone west of Vancouver, is in consequence a man whom Kipling is genuinely aware of and so can make us aware of. But there is no other reality to the story's background, and the perfunctoriness of the human beings both indicates and is exacerbated by a related

\* *Conrad*. By T. Moser. O.U.P. 25s.  
*Conrad and His Characters*. By Richard Curle. Heinemann. 21s.

## WHITE MAN'S FREEDOM

shortcoming of Kipling's—his inability to be relevant about detail at a deeper level than mere vividness demands. Furs, a Greek wife—what has all this got to do with the ghost?—except for a feeble reference to the narrator as Perseus, absolutely nothing. Compare this with Conrad's evocation of an almost supernatural horror in *The Shadow Line*, where the narrator finds that his former captain, who played the violin and had a Chinese mistress, has stolen the quinine that might have saved the stricken ship's company. Again the detail, but this time it has the relevance of true art and true discernment; Conrad's brooding awareness of these people, his admiration for them and their fate, is directly concerned with these odd facts—quinine, the violin, a weak heart. It is very noticeable that Conrad never gives us nautical details except when they are necessary to the subject of human beings. But with Kipling the details are too often a substitute for human beings, and it is then we find that hint of defensive and rather Philistine truculence as if the author were boasting "I may not be clever about chaps, but I do know about triple reciprocating engines."

None the less and in spite of these obvious strictures, I cling to the point that it is in relation to Conrad that the true stature and quality of Kipling appears. Although his famous sense of detail is not connected with human beings, his much less noted appreciation of the large, the mysterious, the inexplicably cruel and sad that underlies human effort and endeavour, most emphatically is. Both he and Conrad have the extraordinary and other-worldly manner of noble primitives who knew nothing of the civilized novelist's essential code—"Only connect. . . ." There is an illuminating essay by E. M. Forster in which he points out, with a hint of outrage, the central darkness in Conrad, the unknowable mist which replaces at the centre the headquarters of civilized conviction and moral enlightenment which (Forster intimates) we should expect to find in a great writer. Clearly there is no communication here; a novelist who has a wholly different conception of the novel is saying, in effect, that he cannot get along with Conrad, that they speak in too different an idiom. A successful *tête à tête* between Forster and Kipling is even more unimaginable. It is this that makes *A Passage to India*, for all its careful symbolism, its apt and perspicacious correspondences, a work that leaves the domination of Conrad and

Kipling over the wild and distant scene fundamentally unchallenged. Where such a scene is concerned their approach seems more relevant, more important; for the insight and analysis that make Mr. Forster so illuminating an observer of the human heart is helpless in the face of mere success and effort, the capacity for doing things. If we compare Mr. Forster's Heaslop, the civil servant of Chandrapore, with his numerous first cousins in Kipling's work, the main difference seems to be that Heaslop is dead because he "cannot connect," whereas Kipling's young men are alive because they get things done. Mr. Forster is eminently just to Heaslop; he points out that the poor man worked hard in the courts all day, dispensing real justice, so that in the evening he wanted, very naturally, to relax and play tennis with "his kind." But this fairness carries no conviction. We find him, stiff and priggish as he is, watching the polo, and unable even to tell his betrothed the name of the bird that has just flown by. Mr. Forster is incapable of being fair to Heaslop, however much he may wish to be, because he has no imaginative grasp of the points where Heaslop is alive: his analysis of him reveals only death. Similarly the Marabar hills, those symbols of Indian nothingness, separation, the desertion that rebuffs the intelligence, fail to convince us because of their air of being fitted into a vision of life in which they stand for something not themselves: they are the unanswered letter, the blank spots in the cocktail party—their very nullity is encapsulated by the Forsterian universe. How claustrophobic the developed heart can be, and we never get this sense of enclosure in Kipling. He leaves things and people outside himself. If we compare the Marabar with *The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes*, or *The End of the Passage*, or even with that little known diary of Un-British India called *Letters of Marque*, there is no mistaking the freedom in the latter, the apprehensions of terror and emptiness that are set down, as in Conrad, in all their primal strangeness. Despite the ravages of time and the critic, Kipling retains the power, so rare to-day, of making our imaginations aware of space and possibility, the power of making us hear, like the Explorer in his poem

—the mile-wide mutterings of unimagined  
rivers,  
And beyond the nameless timber see illimitable  
plains!

JOHN BAYLEY.

## THE NATIONAL AND ENGLISH REVIEW

### PRINCE OF THOUGHT

FREDERICK II OF HOHENSTAUFEN. A Life by Georgina Masson. Secker and Warburg. 35s.

“ONE who in mere genius, in mere accomplishments, was surely the greatest Prince who ever wore a crown, a Prince who held the greatest place on earth, and was concerned in some of the greatest transactions of one of the greatest ages . . . by nature more than peer of Alexander, of Constantine, and of Charles.” So wrote one of the most distinguished of Victorian scholars. And yet Freeman pointed out in the same passage that neither folklore nor history has awarded to Frederick the epithet of “Great”; he has remained as our own Matthew Paris of St. Albans dubbed him, “*Stupor Mundi*”—the Wonder of the World. To his contemporary, Pope Gregory IX, the picture was a different one: “a monster has come out of the sea, with the paws of a bear, the jaws of a lion, like to a leopard: its mouth opens only to blaspheme God and the saints.”

What was Frederick's real personality? What legacy did he leave behind? What was his place in the history of Italy, of Germany and of the world? These questions have baffled historians for generations and there is no simple answer to them: nor has Miss Masson pretended to provide a new one. Her approach to Frederick was stimulated by the monuments which he left behind him in Italy, by the lonely grandeur of Castel del Monte or the sumptuous porphyry of the Emperor's tomb in Palermo. It follows from this beginning that her interest in the subject is from an Italian standpoint, and grows warmest when she is discussing the artistic, literary and scientific achievements of Frederick's court and entourage. Conversely, her concern is less with Germany and with the disastrous effects of Frederick's reign on the history of that country, though admittedly the main factor here was Frederick's own and admitted preference for his Sicilian dominions over all else that he ruled.

More care could have been given to the accessories to this volume. It is disturbing to find the pedigree at the beginning described as “geneological,” and more than disturbing to discover the wife of John of England called “Margaret” of Angoulême. While the illegitimate daughter of Frederick who married John Vatatzes, Emperor of Nicaea, was called Constance in the West, she was known as Anna in the East. And while Miss Masson describes with care and accuracy on p. 165



BUST OF THE EMPEROR FREDERICK II OF HOHENSTAUFEN.

the provinces of Sicily, only one of them is shown on the map at the end (which incidentally does not show all the German provinces or the seats of any of the three archiepiscopal electors). There are some sad misprints (as Enzo for Enzo on p. 39, or *opus Alexandrum* for *Alexandrinum* on p. 187). At other points, too, some lack of historical background seems to handicap the author. The German *ministeriales* can scarcely be equated with “great officers of state” (p. 67), and more attention might have been given to the differing feudal structure on the island of Sicily and on the mainland. One misses Cahen's excellent work on this subject in the bibliography, which also contains no indication that Kantorowicz' *Life of Frederick* has been translated into English, no mention of the various works of Professor Barraclough on German history of this period, and which does not cite the most useful volume (that by Jordan) of the *Histoire Générale* edited by Glotz.

None the less, there are few works in English on the mysterious figure of Frederick II, and on general grounds we must welcome a new one. Miss Masson traces Frederick's remarkable career with lucidity and a reasoned

## PRINCE OF THOUGHT

appreciation of his basic problems. He was after all a creature of paradox. For all his northern blood—and his mother was only three generations from Normandy—he belonged to the Mediterranean world: yet he failed to master the problems of Outremer, and his solution, though diplomatically brilliant, was politically superficial. The ward of the greatest mediæval Pope, he was twice to suffer excommunication, and while excommunicate to recover Jerusalem. Although his perception of Empire was clear and exalted, he was to leave disaster behind him for Italy, Germany and the Holy Land; an able lawgiver, he left a legacy of lawlessness. The facts behind these contradictions Miss Masson presents to us logically enough, but the essential problem remains unresolved. She is kindly enough to his shortcomings, his occasional cruelty and his constant lust, but perhaps too charitable to his political mistakes. Did he not fatally misunderstand the position and promise of the German towns? Was it even possible to challenge the spiritual resources of the 13th-century Papacy with temporal weapons, whether of mail or manifesto? Frederick could perceive the topographical menace of the Patrimony of St. Peter to his Italian schemes; but did he ever pause to weigh up calmly the threat to Rome of the Empire united to Sicily?

Perhaps, however, the author is right in stressing Frederick's intellectual pre-occupations as against his political wrestling. For in the long run it was in the things of the mind that he was fruitful. His dynasty crumbled into anarchy; his best-loved bastard spent a life in prison only for being his father's son. But vernacular literature has won the day over papal latinity; Castel del Monte still stands; men still write sonnets; enquiring minds vex themselves with the questions that troubled the percipient Emperor. His gold Augustale remains the loveliest of mediæval coins; his great treatise on birds and falconry still breathes the scientific spirit. These aspects Miss Masson illustrates with some excellent photographs, including one of an exciting, though sadly mutilated, bust of Frederick himself recently discovered at Barletta. In this world the spirit of the great ruler triumphed, not in that of politics or war: for, as the English chronicler Capgrave shrewdly observed of his death, "the Empire, in maner, sesed here."

MICHAEL MACLAGAN.

## DALMATIAN DUCE

TITOISM. By Charles P. McVicker. *Macmillan*. 36s.

IT is axiomatic that the heretic will always be subjected to far worse persecution than the outright pagan. The crusades against the Albigensians, for instance, called forth far greater ferocity than the gentlemanly affairs in Palestine at the same time. And the principle applies even among the heretics themselves; no one is keener on persecuting heretics than the successful heretic; Calvin, the most successful heretic of them all, had an extremely short way with dissenters.

As with the Church, so with Communism. The astonishing spectacle of two Communist powers, who had a few months before given exhibition after exhibition of that unconvincing solidarity which the Communist propagandists love, abusing and reviling each other

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in terms which, used fifty years ago, would inevitably have led to war, astonished the world in the autumn of 1948. "Pope" Stalin decreed that the heretic Tito must be brought down at any cost, but he survived, and now it is Tito's turn to train his big guns on his heretic, Milovan Djilas.

There could never have been a more reluctant heretic than Tito. He had no desire to deviate from the pure milk of Stalinism. On the contrary, Yugoslavia, in the years immediately after the war, had advanced farther and faster on the road to complete Communization than any other Russian satellite. He made one simple demand: that the Communism which he hoped to build must be in the interest of Yugoslavia as well as Russia. In other words, the Yugoslavs objected only to the fact that the fruits of their labours all went to the Soviet Union, while the Yugoslav peasant was near starvation. Even after the break, judging by the plaintive tone of the official statements of the Yugoslav Government, it was some time before he understood that, so far from what had been going on in Yugoslavia being the fault of one or two minor Soviet officials, Stalin himself regarded the satellites as milch-cows for the Soviet people.

So the great Titoist heresy came about by accident. Deprived of the support of the Soviet Union, the Yugoslav Communists had of necessity to find other methods to keep their régime in power. And only one was available; to make it more palatable to the people.

Dr. McVicker, in this excellent survey of Yugoslavia, shows how it was done. The key to the whole experiment is the famous system of workers' councils, which really does seem to provide some form of industrial democracy. But with this has come a liberalization, too, of all other aspects of life—except politics. The courts, for instance, except in the case of political trials, seem to be completely free from political domination, and have even, on occasion, condemned the administrative actions of the Government itself. Political freedom, however, is barred. What little democracy there is is enshrined in the form of the "vertical" trade associations, and this produces one of the strangest paradoxes of all. For the political system which is now developing in Yugoslavia has an uncanny resemblance to the corporative state of Mussolini's dream. It would be ironical, indeed, if the Communist dictator succeeded where the Fascist failed.

It is this absence of political freedom which has produced Djilasism. Djilas is guilty of the cardinal sin—that of carrying an argument

or a process to its logical extreme. If you can have freedom in industry, in the courts of law, even to a certain extent in the universities and the trade unions, then why not in the one side of a nation's life where freedom comes most naturally—in politics? But this would threaten the livelihood of the politicians themselves, and that must never be allowed. And so Djilas, once the greatest friend and probable successor, must go to jail.

This is on the whole a sympathetic work—though the usual ritual obeisances to the American way of life have to be made from time to time. It gives a clear picture of a vitally important development in European politics. And from it one thing seems to emerge fairly clearly: once a dictator embarks on a course of this kind he cannot turn back. Freedom is an infectious thing, and eventually, maybe not for many years, it is the Djilas heresy, rather than the Tito heresy, which is bound to triumph.

PETER KIRK.

#### CASE-BOOK OF ERRORS

SOVIET RUSSIA IN CHINA. By Chiang Kai-shek. *Harrap*. 30s.

CHIANG KAI-SHEK'S book is an attempt to understand why the Kuomintang Government in China was overthrown by Communism. He sees the main reason in a plot organized by Russia. In his view the Chinese Communists have been from first to last the instruments of Moscow, and he thinks that to-day the Communist Government of China is carried on in Moscow's interest. It is natural that Chiang, having forfeited his great position as ruler of China, should see the cause in the knaveries of an external great power. But if he is really so blind as he makes himself appear in this book, the reasons for his fall need hardly be looked for much further than in his own lack of vision. No dictator can last for long who is totally in the dark.

The omissions in his book are astonishing. He has next to nothing to say about the agrarian situation. Yet the rise of Communism in China was due, before all else, to the grievances of the Chinese peasants. Desperate farmers had become bandits; the Communists succeeded because they saw that out of the brigand bands they could organize a Chinese Red Army which could eventually overwhelm the cities, which were the seat of the Kuomintang. This method of seizing power was quite different from that followed in Russia; indeed, Lenin expressly discouraged reliance on the peasantry. The victory by the Chinese Communists took twenty years to come about, and



## Case-book of Errors

their strategy was perfectly clear for most of that time. It was understood by most serious observers. The advisers whom Chiang had asked for from the League of Nations tried again and again to open his eyes to his danger, and urged upon him a comprehensive scheme of land reform which might have forestalled the Communists.

The decisive moment came in 1934 when the Kuomintang had recovered most of Kiangsi province, which for a time had been the Communist stronghold. It planned to reconstruct it as a province which should be a model for the rest of China. It was to be a show-piece of the beneficence of Kuomintang rule. Lord Salter, who was advising on economic matters and was called into consultation on the project by the Chinese Government, begged Chiang to carry through a programme of land reform rather on the lines of the Irish land purchase; the provisions had been worked out in detail by a group of League of Nations agrarian experts. I was at Nanking on the day when Salter had a decisive and negative interview with Chiang, and remember the despair of his advisers afterwards. Chiang rejected their plan partly because he failed to see the connection between this and the struggle against the Communists, and partly because the Kuomintang was too closely tied up with the minor rural landlords.

Chiang believed that all that was necessary on the Kuomintang side was an iron will. He still believes that he fell because he alone could ensure inflexibility, and that collapse came about when in 1949 he was driven into temporary retirement by a Kuomintang cabal.

"The moment I was gone," he writes, "the armed forces and civilians in the mainland seemed to have lost a symbol of common purpose. Thus the political situation, social order and the people's minds all fell under Communist invisible control. The military situation deteriorated and soon became irreparable." This is a heroic view of history; Chiang, if he had read Carlyle, would have felt himself at home. But willpower cannot avail unless it is accompanied by a moderate portion of reason, and this book shows Chiang to have been one of the least wise and most unperceptive statesmen of modern history.

His recommendations for the future need not be taken very seriously. He advises the West to fight an "indirect war" with Russia by using the Kuomintang Chinese, the South Koreans and the South Vietnamese as its pawns. It is surely unusual for a statesman to invite other countries to use him as a pawn. Moreover, the strategy of "indirect war"

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## MACMILLAN

## THE NATIONAL AND ENGLISH REVIEW

is exactly the one which Chiang says that Moscow has used, and he condemns it for this very reason. If Russia may not practise it, why is it legitimate for America?

The life and errors of Chiang Kai-shek are a subject of exceptional usefulness for those who try to learn lessons for politics by studying case histories. It would have fascinated Machiavelli. The present book makes the subject still more illuminating. It supplies so much information—not about events but about Chiang. And it may lay a ghost. Nobody who reads it can suppose any longer that Chiang can recover his power.

GUY WINT.

### HEART'S DESIRE

AN AFFAIR OF THE HEART. By Dilys Powell. Hodder and Stoughton. 21s.

TILL I END MY SONG. By Robert Gibbings. Dent. 25s.

ARABESQUE AND HONEYCOMB. By Sacheverell Sitwell. Hale. 35s.

MAINLY ON THE AIR. By Max Beerbohm. Heinemann. 21s.

A BOOK OF ANECDOTES. Selected and edited by Daniel George. Hulton. 18s.

NEWMAN, HIS LIFE AND SPIRITUALITY. By Louis Bouyer. Burns and Oates. 30s.

THREE GENERATIONS. By Vladimir Polunin. Leonard Hill (Books) Ltd. 27s.

JOURNALS OF JEAN COCTEAU. Museum Press. 30s.

THE ICICLE AND THE SUN. By William Sansom. Hogarth Press. 18s.

A CORNISH YEAR. By C. C. Vyvyan. Owen. 18s.

THE HOUSE OF CASSELL. By Simon Nowell-Smith. Cassell. 30s.

**A**MONG the distinguished little group of good writers who publish far too little Miss Dilys Powell has a prominent place. Probably her film criticism, witty and acute as she makes it for so many weeks of the year, deters her from writing full-length books and one may be thankful that her love of Greece which has inspired three of her earlier works has driven her now to *An Affair of the Heart* and it is the best of them all.

In 1929 Humphry Payne, Miss Powell's first husband, newly appointed Director of the British School of Archaeology at Athens, was searching for an ancient site to explore when he came to a peninsula, separating the Corinthian from the Halcyonic Gulf. Desolate and beautiful, it is known as Perachora, and a little inland from it is a village of the same name.

Payne was convinced that there were important remains near the site of the Heraion, which had been set up on the headland which is the point of the triangle. He asked for a permit to dig and the excavations lasted for four seasons until 1933. The workmen came from Perachora village six miles away in the hills and from the very first excavations the site yielded richly. It proved to have been a small but well-to-do Greek town. There were the foundations of a temple from the 9th century B.C. There were other important architectural remains, but it was the beautiful and precious objects which had been offered as presents to the goddess Hera that were the greatest finds of all. Before only the greatest sanctuaries had yielded so much miniature treasure, and it was regarded as a kind of miracle that it should now be found in a barren little corner of Greece.

The villagers were delighted. They were also misguidedly optimistic. Perachora, they said, would be famous. No doubt people would flock from all over the world to see the finds at the Heraion. They even had visions of a village museum where the treasure could be exhibited, although they had been told that by law it was the property of the national collection in Athens. For a time the vestigial foundations of the little museum were visible, but nothing more was done. In Greece the builders often seem to have lost heart before "they reached their journey's end," and Miss Powell's reason for this circumstance is worth giving:

The English, when they build, begin with the conviction that they can finish without interruption. The Greeks, inured to invasion, occupation, earthquake and political upheaval, always struggling to lift themselves from some unmerited disaster, begin with enthusiasm and finish when they can. The Perachorans began their museum with enthusiasm. We ought to have known that though in a year's time there would still be optimism, there might be nothing else.

The most fascinating thing about *An Affair of the Heart* is the delightful and attractive account of the Perachorans which Miss Powell has written out of the experience she gained during her work on the "dig" during the 'thirties, and also from three visits to Greece after the war.

In 1945, when the country was still suffering from enemy occupation, Miss Powell went out to lecture for the British Council and was assailed by her old friends, who were astounded by the political obtuseness of the English, and by what they called "the English-

## HEART'S DESIRE

man's vague ignorant sympathy with EAM and ELAS." They were also particularly anxious that the English should stop placating the Russians.

The Greeks had cause for their bitterness. The war had brought them near to starvation. Beans and dried peas just kept them alive. One girl described the memorable day when her household promised themselves a square meal. A piece of donkey flesh was bought at great cost, but when faced with the dish they found they could not eat it.

Before Miss Powell's second visit in 1953 there was a terrible civil war, but she found that it did not appear to have robbed the Greeks of their traditional resilience. There was the old hospitality for the stranger, and Perachora had a new road from the village to the Heraion, which had become more accessible and favoured by picnic parties, but the friendliness of the local people took Miss Powell back seventeen years.

The following year the British School at Athens was digging in the island of Chios and Miss Powell went out to report the results of the underwater explorations at Emporio, a

small port on the narrow channel between Chios and Asia Minor. There was time also for a visit to Perachora, where a miracle had happened. Within a year a museum had been built. "And what have the people at Athens sent you?" Miss Powell asked. "Nothing yet; we are waiting," was the reply, and they went on to ask her what she would say in her next book about them. Her answer could be only a very simple one.

The Perachorans are poor and they have built a museum. They have nothing to put in it and so they wait, and no doubt enters their minds, but that everything they remember from the Heraion will be returned to them for display in their museum. And that is all.

Beautifully written, scrupulously fair in its characterization, and most revealing in its account of a delightful people set down in a lovely, remote place, *An Affair of the Heart* earns for Miss Powell new and well-deserved honours. It is a book I shall return to often for its serenity and charm.

As discursive and well illustrated as usual and written on one of his pet subjects, Mr. Gibbings' *Till I End My Song* is concerned

### An Arctic Explorer

## Nansen

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## The Man on the Rock

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LONGMANS

mostly with the new cottage and garden he has acquired in a Berkshire village. The wood engravings are some of the best Mr. Gibbings has ever done and the adjacent stretch of the Thames provides him with some congenial material for one of the best of his friendly books.

His method as a writer is not easy to describe, but it certainly depends for its effectiveness on one interesting thing leading to another, however far apart they may be. (As we go to press his death is announced, and I take this opportunity of recording my regret.)

Having noted that January 16 seemed to be the turn of the year because three tiny snowdrops had appeared on the lawn and the rooks were bowing to each other beside their past season's nests, Mr. Gibbings records his pleasure that the postman had just brought him a letter from a lady of seventy-six asking if he would take her to a dance. This is followed—within a page—by allusions to Sibelius, Appleford (famous for onions) and John Faulkner, the jockey who rode his first winner when he was eight, was still in the saddle at seventy, had thirty-two children, and died when he was 104. Admirers of both Gilbert White and Selden will find a great deal to admire in *Till I End My Song* with its happy illustrations.

Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell has written so much in prose and verse and his books are so difficult to classify, except for the instructed, that he has had less than justice done to him as a writer who contrives to be urbane, witty, evocative, learned, and most charmingly descriptive in an impressive array of prose works.

*Arabesque and Honeycomb* is the result of an idea which began to haunt its author when he first set foot in Morocco in 1927, and saw its "mosques and its human beings." The order is characteristic of Mr. Sitwell, who adds that he was immediately determined to go sometime to Persia, an ambition that was only realized in 1956. The tour turned out to be a most agreeable æsthetic debauch, with the blue domes of Isfahan and the gold domes of Meshed taking pride of place. There are some lovely coloured illustrations of them. Mr. Sitwell also visited Jerusalem, Cairo, and Istanbul; in fact, most of the Moslem world with the exception of India. A good example of Mr. Sitwell's method occurs in the chapter on Meshed, when he was climbing down from a high portal:

Coming down over the stepping-stones I was so near that I could touch the blue dome with my hand, and picked up a chip or fragment of it to carry away in my pocket. I could see the

subtlety of its swelling shape and the almost mamillary or Paphian beauty of its curve; admire the black Kufic writing upon its waist; and the yellow arabesques or tendrils that are so simple in pattern as they grow bigger from the apex and descend the swelling sides. Back again on earth, looking up at the minaret a moment later I could scarcely believe I had climbed it for the most exciting experience I have ever known. But the dome had changed colour. The blue which I had been comparing to turquoise was now sea-green in the midday sky. By evening, at the hour of the horns and drums, it was a shining turquoise again, but darkening in the twilight to a cornflower blue.

Mr. Sitwell does not claim to be a professional art historian, but he has the ability to bring the past to life for the general reader and to present his own views and experiences on the way as a kind of obbligator to the main theme.

The new edition of the late Sir Max Beerbohm's *Mainly on the Air* is enlarged by the addition of nine new pieces, all of them reprinted broadcasts with the exception of *Lytton Strachey*, which was the Rede Lecture for 1943. At the time Sir Max was back in England, an exile from his beloved Italy, and Cambridge had the good sense to snaffle him for this annual event. It is a model of what a discourse of this kind ought to be, learned, informative, stimulating, and in places very amusing. There are some very good things about satire and satirists in it. There was not much about satire that Beerbohm did not know. His imaginary portrait of "T. Fenning Dodworth" is such a delicate enlargement of the consequential bore it depicts that one can almost swear that one has met him and suffered from his platitudes. The pieces on Nat Goodwin and H. B. Irving, written before the First World War, have a lively gaiety that vanished from the later essays. One thing is clear and that is that although Beerbohm's essays are mannered as are the essays of Ella they do not date.

Beerbohm was one of the few men alive in this decade who were stylists in their use of the spoken as well as of the written word. His English is as pleasant to read as it was to listen to on the air and there are few authors, however eminent, of whom this can be said.

In *A Book of Anecdotes* Mr. Daniel George confesses that he only designed an agreeable *mélange* of anecdotes, most of them unfamiliar or unremembered, given in the words of the first tellers of them. The result is, in fact, one of the best books for dipping into that I have encountered for a long time. Mr. George has a nice critical talent which compels him to get

right down to source material and this compendium of good and famous stories is accompanied by a running commentary from Mr. George. There is something to be learned here about Columbus and the egg, King Alfred and the cakes, and Sir Isaac Newton and the apple.

I had always thought the tale of the little Dutch boy who kept his finger in the dyke and thereby saved the town of Haarlem from submersion highly improbable, and Mr. George scotches the fable here. It seems that this gallant urchin was unknown to history. He made his first appearance in a short story by an American author, who did not know much about dykes. The story circled the globe and in 1950, to satisfy American tourists, the Dutch erected at the Spaarndam Lock in Holland a statue to this quite mythical child.

Books about Oxford celebrities seem to be the fashion, and now after biographies of Jowett and Pattison Father Bouyer of the Oratory has written *Newman, His Life and Spirituality*. There have been various books about Newman, including the formidable biography by Wilfrid Ward, which confined itself principally to the second half of the Cardinal's life. Others have written about Newman's relationship to the Oxford movement. Father Bouyer, whose book has been well translated by Mr. Lewis May, has devoted his study equally to the Anglican and Catholic periods of his subject's life, stressing the time spent at Trinity and Oriel and making use of much documentary material which has not been used before.

Newman lived for ninety years. He prophesied that the slackening and abandonment of belief would lead to a lowering of moral standards, uncertainty about human destiny, insecurity and anxiety and worry which beset so many people to-day. Father Bouyer writes vividly of Newman's life at home, where as the eldest son he had his troubles with two temperamental younger brothers. His precocious scholarship soon made a reputation for him at Trinity, but although his gentle nature rebelled against some of the more brutish habits of his fellow-undergraduates, he seems to have fallen in love with Oxford at first sight. The affection was reciprocated and almost at the end of his life Trinity conferred on Newman an honorary fellowship, the first they had ever bestowed. A few weeks later, in spite of Manning's trickery, Pope Leo XIII created him a Cardinal, and after many years of frustration and neglect Newman received the recognition he had so hardly earned. *Newman, His Life and Spirituality* is fascinating not only for its account of an

extraordinary man, but also for its picture of a most important phase in the history of Victorian Oxford.

Family life in Russia between the years 1845 and 1902 is the theme of Vladimir Polunin's attractive *Three Generations*, which has been done into English by the author's friend, Mr. Birch-Jones.

Polunin, who was born in 1880, died only last year. His career was unusually varied: born in Moscow and educated at St. Petersburg University, where he took a degree in forestry, which qualified him for his first post in charge of a government forest. The contemplation of trees was not enough for Polunin. He went off to study art in Paris and he became associated with the great era of the Russian ballet and was for many years Diaghilev's scenic painter. The work of his which is probably best known to English people is the drop-curtain at the Stratford Memorial Theatre, but I believe that *Three Generations* will take its place not so very far below Serghei Aksakoff's famous trilogy.

Polunin, however, begins his story thirty-five years before his own birth. His grandfather's life in the provincial town of Kursk, and his delightful father's experiences in Moscow in the 'eighties and 'nineties break

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new ground because they reveal the life of a middle-class family, who were in their own way as fully representative of pre-revolutionary Russia as were the more Europeanized nobility, or the lower depths.

*Three Generations* is a book remarkable for its wealth of vivid descriptions and details of a vanished mode of life. Once again an artist shows how well he could write.

The talents of M. Jean Cocteau are many, but his election to the Académie Française in 1955 showed what his countrymen thought of him as a writer. *The Journals of Jean Cocteau*, which have been edited and translated by Mr. Wallace Fowle, is a kind of anthology of short pieces giving Cocteau's opinions on the writer's character, theatre, films, aesthetics, morals and other matters. They have been chosen from six books and the translator has not been altogether successful in rendering in English Cocteau's very individualistic style. In spite of this, the *Journals* make up a book well worth publishing here because it will be most useful for people who know something of the artist's work for stage and screen, but are otherwise unacquainted with his philosophy of life. It is a kind of "Cocteau without Tears."

Among the younger English writers Mr. William Sansom can claim to have a share of the versatility of Mr. Cocteau, as he has written novels, novellas, short stories, essays, children's books, and television plays. *The Icicle in the Sun* is his twentieth book. A series of visits to Scandinavia in summer and winter amazed and enchanted him. He found landscapes, weathers, manners and customs different from those of the rest of Europe.

In *The Icicle in the Sun* his purpose is to try to differentiate between the four countries, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Norway—"so that they may be considered as truly distinct from each other as other European countries whose culture is roughly similar, as distinct as Belgium from France, Portugal from Spain, Austria from Bavaria." There is, of course, much in common between these cultures. Generalizations about them are usually dangerous, but I think that Mr. Sansom is not far from the truth when he writes:

Broadly speaking, you may say that the Danes are easy-going and light-hearted, the Swedes grave and passionate, the Finns earth-bound and near-mystic, the Norwegians active and bluff with a touch of Celtic wildness. But only broadly—there will not be many days before an exception reduces the rule. And one may broadly add that the flat appearance of brick-built Denmark is North German; and that

Norway feels like Sweden with a touch of Danish ease; that Finland is also like Sweden, but with here and there a garnish of old Russian influences. Broadly one will be right: with again too many exceptions to prove the rule. For broad rules are not the kernel of this matter: what is important is the sum total of many small details—and it is this that, in such an impressionistic book, I have tried to convey.

He has carried out his intention most happily. On the surface it may appear at first as though Mr. Sansom has done little more than concoct a précis of the most relevant points to be found in the best books about the four countries. He has done much more than that. He has succeeded in making his points almost entirely by concrete examples, and this could only have been done by an exceptionally able descriptive writer. His method in *The Icicle and the Sun* proves to be so successful that I hope he will extend it to other parts of Europe and elsewhere. I should like to see him put Great Britain under his microscope.

Lady Vyvyan confines herself in *A Cornish Year* to the limits of her own garden. Each month has its chapter and June provides an interlude in the Italian lakes. The author is no dilettante and, although she finds peace and inspiration in her garden and delights in other people's enjoyment of it, she has worked hard for it. *A Cornish Year* is not one of the "literary" garden books that once had so great a vogue, but an appreciation by an artist in words and in nature.

*The House of Cassell* has been in existence for 110 years and its history by Mr. Simon Nowell-Smith was planned for publication in 1948. Unfortunately the Cassells, like other great publishing firms, suffered grievously during the war. Most of their archives were destroyed in the raid on May 11, 1941. It is good to know that the firm's new home in Red Lion Square is now in use.

Cassells have a distinguished and honourable record which has been raised and augmented by the work of Sir Newman Flower, good writer and perceptive publisher, and now by his son. The life of a great publishing house is a chapter in the social history of the day. When Sir Winston Churchill laid the foundation stone of the new building, the French Government, in the person of their Cultural Counsellor, presented him with a silver medal with an effigy of Napoleon, approved by the Emperor, inscribed on the reverse:

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## NOVELS

### Novels

I LIKE IT HERE. Kingsley Amis. *Gollancz*. 13s. 6d.

THE MAN ON THE ROCK. Francis King. *Longmans*. 15s.

THE GODS ARE ANGRY. Wilfred Noyce. *Heinemann*. 15s.

ANGEL WITH BRIGHT HAIR. Paula Batchelor. *Methuen*. 15s.

NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW. R. H. Mottram. *Hutchinsons*. 15s.

DEVIL BY THE SEA. Nina Bawden. *Collins*. 12s. 6d.

DEATH AT THE STRIKE. Colin Willcock. *Heinemann*. 13s. 6d.

THIS is the season of the year when travel agencies strew our desks with their gaudy enticements to foreign parts. With them, in its bright yellow jacket, comes Mr. Kingsley Amis's piece of counter-propaganda, *I Like It Here*.

Amis characters grow out of the bricks and concrete deposited on their native soil. They are not masters of life, though many of them make a fairly good show at lifemanship. Garrett Bowen, the chief character in *I Like It Here*, has a Victorian prejudice against foreign travel and when, partly through one of his own suggestions having been taken at face value, it becomes necessary for him to set out, he is appalled. So are we, for we know that not a stink, not a flea, not a belch nor a vomit, will pass him unrecorded.

There is a shred of plot, connected with an extra commission given to Bowen by a publisher from whom he hopes to get a job. This is to discover whether a newly received novel, purporting to come from a world-famous novelist who has always shrouded himself in mystery, is phoney or real.

The novelist lives in Portugal, so to Portugal, in spite of "that filthy Fascist government," Bowen with his wife and three children is despatched. Of course the rooms which they rent turn out to be dark, fly infested, and in close proximity to a stinking lavatory. Of course the food upsets the children. And when Bowen, who like all Amis "heroes" has amatory divagations, attempts to get a little extra-marital fun, a hornet stings him in the leg at the crucial moment. Inevitably he meets a man in a bar who tells him all those old stories about Salazar—both lots. Finally, and most foreseeably, he doesn't land the job in the publisher's office.

What happens about the novelist? The truth is never found out. What can be found

out is that in spite of gibes, flouts and sneers at almost everything that is remotely connected with the Establishment, Mr. Amis really cares about English literature and can sometimes pay an off-beat tribute to integrity. If you knew this before, you need not bother to read *I Like It Here* as the book is vulgar without being funny and the writing is mostly lacking in energy, which is unusual for this author. Perhaps it was the Portuguese climate.

Since I have not hitherto entirely endorsed the high opinion of Mr. Francis King's previous books held by most of our critics, I must say emphatically that I have been converted by *The Man on the Rock*, one of the best novels which has appeared for some time. It is immensely accomplished technically in its handling of a complicated time and place sequence, it compels compassion, without overtly inviting it, for a despicable character. Odious as Spiro is, he has the integrity of wholeness and if you ever wished that La Fontaine's grasshopper could have got away with it, you will spare him a sigh.

Spiro is a charmer, a penniless Greek boy who lives on anybody, man or woman, who is

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attracted to him. It is not easy to draw the portrait of a charmer and a worthless one at that, but Mr. King succeeds triumphantly. Commonplace as his ambitions are, Spiro is no fool; he has the wit and the cunning always to make the most suitable approach. To the middle-aged Irvine, one of the army of American do-gooders, he is the victim of poverty and banditry, the beggar boy to be raised to higher things. Intellectually he can make the grade and go to concerts, but what he really likes are gold cigarette cases and jewelled cufflinks. Through Irvine he meets Helen, a rich woman in the forties who takes him as her gigolo. He can play up for a while, in a way he almost loves her; but he is so much younger and she is jealous of him; he is not quite at ease and the pressures of his life have always driven him to look from one affair to the next. The next seems unusually promising; the only daughter of a wealthy Greek shipowner falls for him. So what if Helen does take an overdose of sleeping pills, what if Irvine, betrayed by Spiro in a fit of pique, is disgraced and recalled? Spiro will marry Kiki and become a good husband and son-in-law according to his own conventions. For he has conventions, even a kind of morality, though neither is acceptable to Anglo-Saxon thought. Mr. King presents Spiro and his reactions to the world around him, the labyrinth of people themselves living on the beauty and memories of Greece, with marvellous honesty. Spiro is a self-dramatizer and everything around him takes on an extra dimension: Greece is more beautiful, Battersea more drab. Perhaps this dramatization can be held to palliate the weakness of the book, the fact that all the situations are melodramatically solved. I did not believe that Helen would have committed suicide, and millions of women work throughout pregnancy without causing fatal abortion. But Nemesis, and Spiro's own *daemon*, both require that he shall end as we first see him, drifting around the bars of Athens looking for a protector, conscious that there are younger and brighter boys and that time is short. For Spiro is victim as well as victimizer, and it is the realization and development of this which gives Mr. King's book its depth.

Wilfred Noyce, who wrote *The Gods Are Angry*, is himself a great mountaineer and in everything which concerns the organization, personal conflicts, arduous and achievement, of Jim Catteridge's expedition to Mt. Changma, his book is absorbing. From the outset, the members of the team begin to show personal incompatibilities; the Sherpas contain some unreliable elements or, at least, some who are

affected by the legendary ill-luck which has dogged all expeditions to this peak so far. To these complications, Mr. Noyce has, in-advicably it seems to me, added a romantic element: two girls, one the sister of one of the team's fiancée, accompany the expedition to the lower slopes. I cannot say, in face of the writer's great eminence and experience, that this episode is factually unlikely, but I do say that it confers an air of unreality. Once the girls depart, having done their job of promoting jealousy between two of the climbers, the book swings back into its stride and we are given some superb descriptions and a quite magnificent handling of the crisis, the lonely climber who finds the summit from which he will never return. The book is an obvious "must" for all climbing enthusiasts and as an adventure story with a romantic flavouring it should be generally popular.

*Angel With Bright Hair*, as its attractive jacket immediately reveals, is the story of Elizabeth Siddal, the milliner's apprentice who became the favourite model of the pre-Raphaelite group and the wife of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Miss Paula Batchelor has given an obviously well-documented account of the group and its meetings and excellent portraits of Rossetti himself and his family, Ruskin, William Morris and Jane Burden, Ford Madox Ford, the young Swinburne and Burne-Jones. But not surprisingly, she fails to arouse our interest in Lizzie Siddal. The poor young woman certainly had a lot to cope with: her sense of inferiority, Rossetti's improvidence, neglect and infidelities, and her ill-health. But the over-riding impression is that she was very dull, and that it might have been kinder if Rossetti had been an out-and-out cad and let her go, though there is, in the novel, some suggestion of a feminine tenacity that would not have allowed this to happen easily. With all poets it is difficult to disassociate the reality from the artistic distillation; it must have been so easy to associate serenity, purity and goodness with that face, so easy to paint her or to write poetry to her and so dreary to live with her. Miss Batchelor plays down the tragic end and her story does not go on to Rossetti's extravagant remorse. If Lizzie had a "secret," certainly she took it with her; only the pictures of her seem to have any life.

Any book by R. H. Mottram will, one knows, be written with that technical mastery which time and practice should give, together with something that is not within their power to give, a sensitive understanding of the human heart and the inroads

## NOVELS

of time. His portraits form part of a larger one, the picture of an English town as it has grown and changed in the forty and more years that Mr. Mottram has lived and worked in it. *No One Will Ever Know* is the story of the narrator's search for a man named Geoffrey Wantage, a citizen of "Easthampton" who had left his mark on the place, yet whose personality was somehow elusive and whose life story was full of gaps. It is, I think, typical of Mr. Mottram that he should have made Wantage not a painter, but a decorative artist, one of those who worked almost anonymously in the not-so-distant past and whose guiding influence upon our lives and taste is even in these days of publicity not generally recognized. There is something of this unobtrusiveness in Mr. Mottram's own art; now that the dust and heat generated by the 1914-18 war has been rolled over by denser smoke-screens and more threatening clouds on the horizon, we can recognize that *The Spanish Farm* gave perhaps the truest picture of it. To that peak Mr. Mottram has never returned; he has perhaps been too content with his "Easthampton." But none of his novels can be read without a sense of pleasure and comfort.

Very little pleasure or comfort is to be extracted from Nina Bawden's *Devil by the Sea*, which takes us back to the sordid world of frustration, evil and loneliness. Miss Bawden is an extremely gifted writer. In the first few paragraphs she has etched her setting in acid: a dreary English seaside resort at the end of the season, a cold wind blowing, a jet plane screeching overhead, deserted sand-dunes leading to dreary hutments where people come and go. The story is told through the eyes of a child, Hilary, aged about ten, who is an important link in the murder of another child. For Hilary had seen the murdered girl going off with the ugly but pitiful man who had sat next to them round the bandstand. To her little brother, Peregrine, the man had looked like the devil. But Hilary, attracted and repelled, had offered him a sweet. For Hilary feels herself unloved and so compassion is aroused prematurely and dangerously.

This book is an honest attempt to explore a state of feeling which, in the child, is I think a fair subject for artistic consideration, but in the man, the murderer, no one short of a Dostoevsky could produce anything but a psychopathic case study, and it seems fair to protest that the thriller technique is illegitimately used to harrow and that the case is very special pleading. This impression is heightened by the dreary collection of misfits,

none of them with the slightest imagination or warmth, who make up Hilary's family. I did not like the book, but I recognize its merits.

*Death at the Strike* is by contrast a "conventional" thriller. Mr. Colin Willcock had a success with his first book, *Death at Flight*, largely because of his expertise in wild-fowling. This time it is fishing, and again it is Mr. Nathaniel Goss, the publisher, who allows himself to be led by his assistant, Peter Winters, into an extraordinary affair beginning with illicit angling and ending up in murder, lots of it. Mr. Willcock is excellent at arousing anticipation: his night poaching episode, his riverside hotel and the collection of queer fish it houses, whet our appetite for the pay-off. This, however, is melodramatic and disappointing, also more than a little obvious. But that could be said of more expert practitioners in this field. For three-quarters of the way *Death at the Strike* is absorbing and not only to anglers, so we will accept a poor last act, out of gratitude for the book's liveliness and literacy.

RUBY MILLAR.

## Theatre

By KAYE WEBB

**The Rape of the Belt.** By Benn W. Levy  
(Piccadilly Theatre)

THIS comedy, which is also blessed by the presence of four major stars acting up to the top of their bent, may safely be marked up as a triumph. Its author has found a witty idea and married it to some excellent writing and quite a fair dollop of philosophy and the result is one of the gayest evenings to be found in the London theatre.

The Gods are always excellent sport for us mortals, particularly the defaulting ones, and the play opens with Zeus and Hera (most impressively conversational busts) about to witness the exploits of Heracles ("only the upstarts and the Romans called him Hercules") as he arrives in the country of the Amazons to perform his ninth task, the acquisition of the famous Belt.

With him, as an ineffectual aide-de-camp, is Theseus, and the two heroes are stunned to discover that the warlike Amazons are a bunch of gentle and lovely women who refuse to fight because they don't know how, and who confide that their reputation is based



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entirely on rumours propagated by themselves.

Heracles is beguiled, Theseus bewildered and it looks like a victory for the women until the Gods start interfering. Hera, taking a leaf from her husband's book, "borrows" Hippolyte for a space, and the sight of the deliciously drooping Kay Hammond suddenly transformed into a martial lady is something which must not be missed. Neither must Constance Cummings, whom we see far too rarely anyway and who gives here a performance of such charm and sincerity that not only Heracles but the entire audience falls in love with her. Indeed, none of the cast can be faulted at any point. Richard Attenborough is marvellously funny as Theseus and John Clements has a splendid sense of comedy and looks magnificent. Veronica Turleigh and Nicholas Hannen are the Gods and Judith Furse is impressive as the only Amazonian Amazon of the lot.

### Stranger in the Tea. By Lilian and Edward Percy (Arts Theatre)

It is a thousand pities that this play has not survived to be enjoyed by a wider audience. Not so much because of the play itself, although it is a more than competent thriller with a particularly exciting last act, but because of the performance of Robert Eddison as a gentle, distraught scholar, battling with the devil for the possession of his soul.

Reviews of plays that can't be seen are generally rather irritating, but at least this may serve to remind theatre-lovers that Mr. Eddison is a superb actor whose skill appears, astonishingly, to increase with every performance he gives.

### Dinner with the Family. By Jean Anouilh (New Theatre)

*Dinner with the Family* is early Anouilh with the familiar ingredients of purification by love and innocence, and the despoliation arising from cynicism and self-seeking. Although the play is only a pastiche of his future works, Anouilh manages to blend illusion and reality with considerable ingenuity.

A young *roué*, eager to appear as the ideal he has represented himself to be to his pure inamorata, hires a house, complete with a bogus family retainer and two actors (engagingly played by Sally Bowers and Allan MacNaughton) to impersonate his parents. A place is also laid for his devoted friend—another figment of his imagination.

The original exposition in the first act is brilliant, but in the next two acts illusion gives way to reality and the *bon-bon praliné* is sprinkled with arsenic when we are introduced to his actual parents and so-called friend, who turn out to be a bevy of spongers and swindlers. Pure love triumphs in the end, villainy is routed and belief, so far as I am concerned, is suspended.

The acting in the minor parts is erratic. The essence of comedy should be truth allied to innocence and there is no need to display bitterness with a figurative lemon in the mouth, as the words speak for themselves.

The play, however, was well received, and offers an interesting evening to those playgoers who wish to be stimulated as well as entertained.

KAYE WEBB.

## Music

By ROBIN DENNISTON

### A Great Experience

*THE Carmelites* stands comparison with the greatest examples of religious art produced in the last two hundred years. Unlike many other post-Romantic works, it is the product of an intensely religious mind—a mind familiar with the concepts of Christian mysticism, familiar with God and with the religious life, and unlike the troubled, distant respect so often paid the Deity by musicians and other artists who tend thus to sublimate their own sense of striving. Francis Poulenc (and indeed Bernanos who wrote the text of the drama and all the many writers who seem to have had a share of it) approached the highest of all matters in a way which can easily seem blasphemous (the word was frequently to be heard on the lips of the first-night audience), but is actually supremely right. The subject of the work, I take it, is Redemption, the concept of a person by their death buying back life for another, universalized, as we Christians believe, by the redemption of the whole of mankind on the Cross. The opposing force to this desire for martyrdom is fear—the fear of death and the fear of fear itself—of which the Chevalier accuses Blanche in their dialogue in Act II. Fear is rejection, both of living and dying; redemption is acceptance. Looked at from this angle the complex, fast-moving and tautly-constructed plot of *The Carmelites* can be seen to have the cohesion of a true and enduring work of art,



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## THE NATIONAL AND ENGLISH REVIEW

in which the layers of meaning—musical, spiritual, literary, dialectical—are superimposed one on another. Blanche, the heroine, shares with all the great tragic heroines of literature a flaw, a burden of which she herself is innocent, but which will surely shape her destiny. She has been redeemed not merely in that she is a child of God (not because she is a nun but because she is a living spirit), but particularly in that it was the fact of her mother's pregnancy that caused her mother's death in a brawling crowd. Her mother having died (albeit unwittingly) that she might live, Blanche cannot realize herself until she too is redeemer as well as redeemed. It is for this reason that the bustle and panic of ordinary life are too much for her and she retires to the convent, only to find the rigours of the religious life every bit as menacing. The Prioress, dying and darkly surveying the future recognizes in Blanche not only one chosen by God, but chosen in some way to redeem *her*. But Blanche is still only terrified of the Prioress and rejects her special vocation. The dropping of the image of Christ symbolizes this. So does the compulsive rejection of Sister Constance's eager welcoming both of life and the prospect of martyrdom (Sister Constance is a gem-like creation, touchingly realized by Jeannette Sinclair). Her escape from the other nuns and return to her father's ruined house complete the pattern. Sister Blanche of the Agony of Christ—the name she chooses reveals much—eventually walks the steps to the guillotine after her sisters have all, with sickening thuds, come under the knife. I can think of no more moving tragic scene in all opera.

A great work of art. It would be wrong to call *The Carmelites* opera, implying the music as pre-eminent and words lost and forgotten in the larynges of frenetic tenors. The music rises to moments of great beauty and power, particularly in the dramatic scenes—the Prioress's death, the revolutionary hordes invading the convent, the final doom-ridden chorale, at once exalted and macabre. But it consistently subverts the whole, as Wagner thought it should, but could so rarely bring himself to the point of achieving himself. The words here matter enormously; the French title, *Dialogues Des Carmelites*, shows this. The conversations are packed with power, thought, passion. In projecting the words Sylvia Fisher as Mother Marie of the Incarnation was outstanding; Joan Sutherland and Elsie Morrison were curiously ill at ease in their roles; the former a tricky

one dramatically, but the latter a great opportunity unaccountably missed. If this was not a musical feast, it was a religious experience which will not be forgotten.

ROBIN DENISTON.

## Records

By ALEC ROBERTSON

### *Orchestral*

TWO "angry" symphonies head this section of my review, Vaughan Williams's F minor (No. 4) and Walton's sole work in the form. Both of these are better recorded than their competitors, Boult and the L.P.O. (Decca LXT2909), and Walton and the Philharmonia (H.M.V. ALP1027), very fine performances these, with the Walton having the advantage of the composer's direction. Mitropoulos, with the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, plays the Vaughan Williams with terrific sound and fury, but he does not penetrate to the heart of it as Boult did—perhaps no foreign conductor could do that—and in particular misses the point of the brief slow section for muted strings in the tempestuous finale which sounds—as Boult made it sound—a note of peace. Nevertheless, this is in many ways a remarkable performance and well worthy of attention (Phillips ABR4065). The Walton benefits most from the new recording and is admirably interpreted by Boult and the Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra, if occasionally with less bite than the composer gave it (Nixa NCL 16020).

Mahler's very attractive G Major Symphony (No. 4) is given a beautiful performance by Leopold Ludwig and the Saxon State Orchestra with Anny Schlemm singing excellently in the enchanting last movement. The conductor takes the slow movement at a quicker tempo than Bruno Walter, but without prejudice to its contemplative character. Good recording (D.G.G. DGM18359).

David and Igor Oistrakh have made a splendid and altogether delightful recording of Bach's Double Concerto in D Minor, two trio-sonatas, Bach in C Major, Tartini in F Major (with Hans Pischner at the harpsichord), and Vivaldi's Concerto Grosso in A Minor, Op.3, No.8, the Gewandhaus Orchestra Leipzig, under Franz Konwitschny, taking part in the two concertos. Father and son are miraculously at one in all they do and have

## Records

also inspired their collaborators to their best efforts in this really glorious music making (D.G.G. DGM18393).

It is a happy coincidence that the month in which Clifford Curzon received, most deservedly, a C.B.E. in the New Year's Honours list sees the issue, with him as soloist, Knappertsbusch and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, of the finest performance and recording of Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto, yet made; and that is saying a lot in view of the eleven other versions in the catalogues. The playing, by a pianist who weds intelligence to sensitivity in the most satisfying way, is majestic, deeply felt, and revealing, with a most commanding final movement (Decca LXT5391).

Very fine playing, also, is given us by another great pianist, whom we hear all too seldom in the concert hall, Michelangeli, in Rachmaninov's Fourth Piano Concerto (G minor) and Ravel's G Major Concerto, with Ettore Gracis and the Philharmonia Orchestra. The Ravel has not been among my favourite concertos, but Michelangeli's superlative playing puts it in a new light altogether (H.M.V. ALP1538).

*Also recommended.* The Art of Guido Cantelli; a number of movements (with the Philharmonia Orchestra) from symphonies by Schubert, Mendelssohn, Brahms, and Tchaikovsky, with the second and only movement from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony that this greatly gifted conductor lived to record (H.M.V. ALP1535). Suite from Prokofiev's ballet *Cinderella*, delightfully performed by Robert Irving and the R.P.O. (H.M.V. CLP1144). A Berlioz miscellany: Suite from *The Damnation of Faust* (including the Hungarian March, *Dance of the Sylphs*, *Minuet of the Sprites*) the *Trojan March* and the *Roman Carnival Overture*. Outstandingly good performances by Charles Mackerras and the Philharmonia Orchestra (H.M.V. DLP1168). Rachmaninov's *Symphonic Dances*, his last work and mostly music with a smile this composer rarely exhibited. Very enjoyable and well played by Erich Leinsdorf and the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra (Philips ABR4064).

### *Chamber Music*

Mozart's Organ Sonatas were played in Salzburg Cathedral between the intoning of the Epistle and the Gospel at Mass (where the plainsong Gradual and Alleluia should have been sung) and so, in those days of cold and formal faith, helped the congregation through moments of tedium in the Mass. Fifteen of

# ANDREA CHENIER

GIORDANO

Voted one of the works which opera-goers would most like to see revived, and produced with marked success at this year's Dublin Opera Festival, *Andrea Chénier* is included in the current Drury Lane Italian Opera season and is now offered on record in a thrilling performance outstandingly well recorded.

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## THE NATIONAL AND ENGLISH REVIEW

the little pieces are played by Eva Hölderlin and the South-West German Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Rolf Reinhardt, on Vox PL9980 with a church-like acoustic, and it is remarkable how Mozart manages to vary his music and hold the attention. (The two sonatas discovered in 1940 are not here recorded.) Not a disc for everybody, but certainly for true blue Mozartians.

### Instrumental

Some rather distasteful publicity has centred round the name of the young American pianist, Glen Gould, and I approached his disc of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* with reserve. None is needed. This is first-rate Bach playing (and recording), clear and clean and brilliant, and very expressive in Variation No. 25, which Landowska called "the black pearl" (Philips SBL5211).

### Song

A fine recital of *Lieder* by Schumann, sung by Fischer-Dieskau with Günther Weissenborn at the piano. The songs, most of them, are rarely heard and so are very welcome. They include the group of twelve with poems by Kerner. D.G.G. must really consider issuing the German texts with English translations. These songs are all in volumes of the Peters Edition, it is true, but not everyone has these and even if they do the text is in German only (D.G.G. DGM18380).

### Opera

Here is a splendid performance and recording of the *Todesverkündigung* (Brunnhilde's scene with Siegfried) from Act 2 of *Die Walküre* and the whole of Act 3. I must leave this thrilling issue to next month, merely saying now that Flagstad is in wonderful voice and that the orchestral playing (Solti and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra) is glorious (Decca LXT5389-90).

ALEC ROBERTSON.

## Finance

By LOMBARDO

### A New Chancellor

THE first month of the year brought more than one major excitement for the investor. On the eve of the Prime Minister's departure for his Commonwealth tour, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Thorneycroft, staggered everyone by announcing his

resignation. In the markets the main items of news were the terms of the £45 million Shell new issue, and the Government £500 million funding operation.

The discussion aroused by Mr. Thorneycroft's resignation and speculation on the "inner" reasons behind it continues as we go to press, even though the country has had explanations from the Ex-Chancellor and the two Treasury ministers who resigned with him. The main question that arose on the news of his going was whether the recovery in sterling would be halted, and perhaps reversed, and whether gilt-edged would suffer because it would be regarded as a signal that we were to loosen the screws and abandon the stern anti-inflationary policy which had caused the pound to recover in world markets. The shock of the news caused a temporary—and it proved very temporary—decline in gilt-edged and sterling but the early assurance by the new Chancellor that the Government's anti-inflationary policy would not be changed caused a recovery.

### Money Rates

The £500 million funding operation was announced very shortly after Mr. Thorneycroft resigned and the decision to fix a 5½ per cent. rate of interest for an eight-year stock was taken as an indication that Bank Rate was not likely to be reduced at an early date. This raises the broader question, now very much in the minds of both institutional and private investors, of the future of interest rates—and therefore of Government Securities. The swing against gilt-edged stocks which naturally accompanied the boom in equities had denuded most private portfolios of most of their gilts, and confidence in fixed interest securities in an inflationary world had sunk to the lowest levels. When the Government took action last September to halt inflation, and thereby save the pound from the disaster of devaluation, the equity boom went into reverse and tentative hopes were aroused that the gilt-edged market might recover. From the national point of view the essence of the financial situation was that if the Government could not get its credit put on to a sound basis (i.e. lay the foundations of a strong gilt-edged market so that it could finance its capital requirements at a reasonable rate of interest by genuine long-term borrowing from the public) it would have to continue and increase Treasury Bill financing. In short, there would be "printing press finance" leading to further inflation.

The measures taken last autumn are working through the economy—but, as I emphasized last month, the process takes time. Bank Rate at seven per cent. was doing what it was intended to do, but the Treasury resignations raised doubts about the determination of the Government to see the job through. Mr. Amory will have to lean over backwards to demonstrate whenever he can that he has no intention of allowing inflation to rear its ugly head again—even though the brute might lie dormant and be used occasionally to frighten away its rival horror Depression. The new Chancellor will not have an easy task: overseas, he sees restrictions being loosened—in Western Germany the Bank Rate has been reduced from 4 per cent. to 3½ per cent. and in America the Federal Reserve Board has reduced stock margin requirements from 70 to 50 per cent.—and at home the workers in the key industry, coal-mining, have decided to press for an all-round increase in wages. The overseas action shows a recognition of recession and will have its influence here. Sterling is still vulnerable, however, and the Chancellor cannot relax his grip too soon. At home he must continue to refuse to finance wage inflation, for if he does not the foreigner will once again believe that sterling is a dubious currency and the pound will come under pressure in world markets.

#### More Money for Industry

While the hopes and fears for the future have been ebbing and flowing the public have been invited to supply large sums for industrial expansion. The "rights" issue by Shell, which will raise £45 million, follows the B.P. issue, the Vickers, Esso, and other issues, on all of which there are calls to be met in the next few months. Many millions of pounds are already earmarked to follow the millions already paid for the new stock, and these large sums have gone out of the pool of savings available for normal investment through the Stock Exchange. Taken in conjunction with the uncertainties of the financial background, this indicates that the equity market is not likely to see any substantial recovery for some time, but, as soon as investors believe that recovery is assured and interest rates will decline, equity shares will be bought and prices could rise sharply.

#### Free Trade Area

The beginning of January saw the birth of the European Common Market, and attention in this country was therefore directed

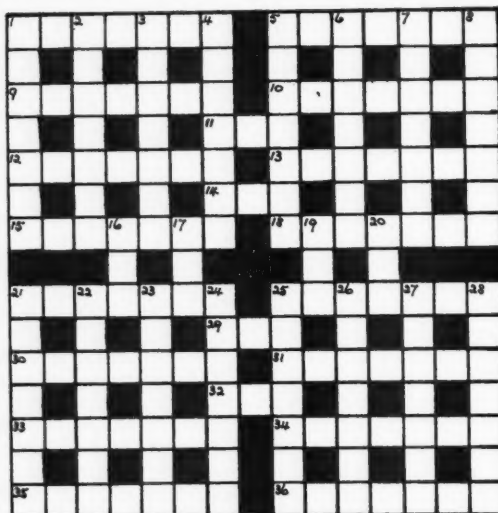
afresh to the problems of the proposed Free Trade Area. The Ministerial Committee under Mr. Maudling's leadership has been negotiating in Paris and is discovering from which quarter and to what extent support and opposition to the British point of view may be expected. The United Kingdom policy has kept to the forefront the political need to avoid a split in Europe by the creation of an exclusive trading group and has urged that a Free Trade Area should be organized on as liberal a basis as possible. The inability of the United Kingdom to exclude Commonwealth considerations when discussing proposals is well understood on the European Continent but the British plan to exclude agricultural products from any agreement has roused strong French opposition. As we go to press an alternative plan is being prepared by the French, and if this includes a proposal that Free Trade Area countries should limit their freedom to fix their own external tariffs the negotiations could be prolonged, since this would upset Commonwealth commitments. It is not at all certain that these differences can be resolved by the autumn, by which time the Free Trade Area proposals would have to be in Treaty form to be ratified by twelve Parliaments before January 1959, in order that the initial reductions in tariffs envisaged for the Area should coincide with the reductions already agreed on by the Common Market Countries.

The world of industry, commerce, and finance has followed the various stages of negotiation with great interest since the outcome will certainly, though perhaps slowly, change the pattern of European trade. Indeed the social as well as the trade pattern of the European countries, including Britain, could alter considerably as a result of a gradual redeployment of industrial activity combined with a new and wider mobility of labour encouraged by the harmonization of social benefits. The possibilities inherent in the proposals are so great, especially as they come at a time of great scientific advances which alone could cause changes as great as those which came with the Industrial Revolution, that the most far-seeing industrialists and financiers cannot set their sights at a distant target. If for no other reason 1958 will be significant as the year in which a European Common Market came into being, and in which, perhaps, the British nation entered into a new commercial and economic relationship with her most important Continental neighbours.

LOMBARDO,



# NATIONAL & ENGLISH REVIEW CROSSWORD No. 18



A Prize of one guinea will be awarded for the first correct solution opened on February 14th. Please cut out and send, with your name and address, to National and English Review (Crossword), 2 Breams Buildings, London, E.C.4.

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## SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD PUZZLE NUMBER 17

ACROSS.—1. Gadget. 5. Ardent. 9. Rum. 11. Evil-eye. 12. Excited. 13. Asti. 14. State. 15. Oboe. 18. Turbine. 20. Answers. 22. Saltire. 23. Dresser. 28. Rest. 29. Smack. 30. Zinc. 33. Platoon. 34. Retried. 35. Emu. 36. Styled. 37. Mended.

DOWN.—2. Aviator. 3. Glee. 4. Trestle. 5. Amentia. 6. Duck. 7. Notable. 8. Tenant. 10. Adders. 16. Mimic. 17. Isles. 19. Una. 21. Rue. 22. Strips. 23. Last act. 24. Ermined. 25. Decorum. 26. Suicide. 27. Recede. 31. Tool. 32. Eton.

### ACROSS

1. It's wrong about people suffering (7)
5. Filaments can be set hard (7)
9. (7)
10. Got up and had a meal, being optimistic (7)
11. Raced in the Grand National (3)
12. Go back on crumbling terrace (7)
13. A man from eastern Europe going round the street as a messenger (7)
14. Not a happy arrangement of small advertisements (3)
15. Borders walks (7)
18. Presumably he's a regular soldier (7)
21. "... is hoarse and may not speak aloud." Shakespear (Romeo and Juliet) (7)
25. Pull in a gownsman making a ceremonial vessel (7)
29. Short garment for a Scot (3)
30. Draw a pledge,—it may encumber a traveller (7)
31. Sour one may be hard (7)
32. Part of a trunk road where one has to move quickly (3)
33. Falls back once more on the painter (7)
34. Early form of nominal abbreviation (7)
35. So accounts should be verified (7)
36. Far from mean (7)

### CLUES

### DOWN

1. So much French spirit causes ill-temper (7)
2. It goes round, up or down (7)
3. Eulogy on being late (7)
4. Joe goes back into the lock for an animal (7)
5. Rent trouble?—Blow! (7)
6. Spend or answer for it (7)
7. A final alternative from Shelley? (7)
8. Did travellers by stage see more of it than we do? (7)
16. To many a copper is an outsider (3)
17. Breakfast food,—for example herring's tail (3)
19. "The sun looked over the mountain's ..." Browning (Parting at Morning) (3)
20. French coin given in security (3)
21. Pope wrote of her loss of hair (7)
22. The mean fellow, to draw back after upsetting a drink! (7)
23. After a stoppage a worker is obdurate (7)
24. Red meal can be turned into green (7)
25. This flower has one spot on it inside (7)
26. Foretell colour in an ancient Northerner (7)
27. Majestic as a former pontiff? (7)
28. The sailor has to find an answer,—don't blame him! (7)

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